No. 681. For Week Ending January 18th, 1902. [One Penny.

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SHORT STORIES.

No. 681.] For the Week Ending January 18th, 1902. [ONE PENNY.

A BRIDE BY DESTINY.

By R. Norman Silver.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGINAL OF A PORTRAIT.

"WHEN you have finished that, Miss Hamilton, you might step down into the shop for an hour—they are short-handed this afternoon. I have spoken to Madame about sparing you."

"Yes, Mr. Randegger," was the quiet response, and the girl at the nearer extremity of the battered wooden table went on with the deft movements that were completing a magnificent bouquet of orchids, from which hung delicate green streamers of smilax.

The face bent over the splendid blossoms had been raised momentarily; it was grave, even a trifle proud, the eyes, however, added a certain sweetness, and the features were both fine and regular. There were prettier countenances round the flower-laden work-bench in the bare apartment, but none more striking and characteristic.

A row of square, uncurtained windows flooded the low-ceiled place with autumn sunshine and framed vivacious views of the smartest shopping quarter in the metropolis. The sashes were open, but the atmosphere, nevertheless, was oppressed by a medley of perfumes—the scents of roses, lilies, carnations, violets, and the curious, unfamiliar odours of rarer growths.

The clever West-end tradesman was studying the mass of glorious blooms on which his employee was engaged; a band of white heather, built up as he watched, incircled them like a belt of unsullied snow. He twirled a neat Imperial with a lean finger and thumb, then shot out an arm and manipulated several of the orchids.

"*So!*" he said, and made a significant "foreign" gesture; "but it is very good, you keep life in the flowers—life and air. *Peste!*" he broke off, "the shop—I am forgetting the shop!"

A couple of strides—oddly suggestive of a dancing-master's fantastic motions—carried Mr. Randegger, a stout, volatile Italian, towards the door. On the threshold he halted and glanced back.

"You will be down soon, Miss Hamilton?" was his reminder; "yet—yet do not hasten regardlessly; I, myself promised Lord Quantock that the bouquets should be perfection—*perfection!*" Another eloquent flourish, and the speaker had disappeared.

"What folly," said a vigorous, middle-aged woman, whose black silk blouse, sharp self-possession, and seat at the top of the table marked her for the mistress of the small staff; "it is I who need help, not the shop. The Quantock bouquets will be late, that is all. Eunice, child, have you much more to do?"

"No, Madame Brissac," answered Eunice Hamilton, getting up to show the state of her task. The chief florist nodded appreciation.

"Excellent!" she commented; "you are a feather in Mr. Randegger's cap, little one, for he took you into the room against my advice. I believed you too inexperienced to come in as an improver, and too old to enter as an apprentice. I should have remembered that you American girls are different from the English."

She glanced shrewdly at the subject of this compliment. "You are wearing a new ornament," observed the Frenchwoman, "the charm at your throat. I thought I saw a handsome face—has some gallant monsieur been offering you his portrait as a love-token?"

Eunice blushed, put the finished bouquet on a stand and lifted the article to which Madame Brissac's inquiry had related. It was a gold disc—the size of a crown piece—modelled to resemble a diminutive shield. An amethyst formed the boss, and the edge was set with a circle of minute diamonds. A miniature occupied the reverse of the ornament—depicting a youthful, masculine visage, gay and resolute. The vividly blue pupils were frank and generous, but the full, clean-shaven jaw and upper lip revealed an unusual degree of determination. The result was that mingling of strength and candour so attractive to a feminine critic.

"It must have been my mother's," said Eunice Hamilton; "I found it yesterday evening in a bag of buttons—I expect it was mislaid by accident, perhaps years ago. There is a date on the picture—eighteen eighty-three or five; I don't know who it is, though."

The chief florist surveyed the miniature.

"Why is the face not strange to me," she queried absently; "whom can it recall? It is English, and I have few English friends. Ah, yes, it is like the young gentleman who came with Lord Quantock to decide upon the bouquets. I heard his name mentioned—Mr.—Mr. Carr."

"Oh, no, Madame," cried Eunice; "the portrait is much—much handsomer."

"How should you tell, child?" retorted her superior; "you did not see him—Mr. Randegger sent up for me."

Eunice coloured.

"Mr. Carr was often in the shop," she explained; "while I was downstairs—I—I used to serve him."

Madame Brissac smiled.

"Eunice," she declared, "you are an innocent of the most amusing. So Mr. Carr is *coquet*—a flirt, is he? Well, he is about to *ranger* himself—to marry. Miss Nita Warwick, the future Madame Carr, is to be of the bridesmaids at Lord Quantock's wedding—Mr. Carr, Mr. Austin Carr, will be the bridegroom's friend—his best man, as you say. I read it all in your paper *The Gossip*. What a droll title is that for a journal!"

Eunice turned the jewelled shield to hide—as it rested on her bosom—the picture of the unknown whose claim to exceptional beauty she had been so quick to champion.

"Shall I go down now, Madame?" she asked.

The Frenchwoman devoted herself afresh to her occupation—she had been indicating, by rapid pencil-strokes, a design for an enormous harp, of chrysanthemums and tuberoses.

"Yes," was the answer; "and if you ever serve Mr

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Carr again compare him with your miniature—there is a resemblance certainly."

Evading further discussion, Eunice hurried out of the workroom and descended to the great fruit and flower emporium controlled by Antonio Randegger, and famous in two hemispheres as "Randy's."

The Italian nodded to her as she entered, and for the succeeding half-hour she was engrossed by the demands of a dozen customers—whose requirements varied between a ten-guinea floral emblem—for presentation to a burlesque actress—and a shilling camellia for an amateur tenor's dress-coat.

She had only just concluded the latter transaction when a remark—uttered at her elbow—startled her.

"It is," said a harsh, but bantering voice, subdued to the cautious tones that seldom pass beyond the ears for which they are intended; "it is Miss Gravity, and no other. Where on earth have you been?"

Eunice looked up. By her stood a person still apparently in his earlier twenties. An immaculate silk hat and fashionable coat bore witness to his social position, his complexion was high, his teeth—uncovered by beard or moustache—even and perfect, his demeanour boyish. But this mouth betrayed the vulgar selfishness of the Society idler, and his eyes gleamed with a slow, insolent humour.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Carr," rejoined Eunice swiftly "what do you wish—" She hesitated, checked by a shrug of the brown-coated shoulders.

"Rubbish!" snapped Austin Carr; "I was getting back to the club from a late luncheon but caught sight of you through the glass and popped in. As I'm here you might give me a button-hole—carnations, for choice."

The girl prepared a cluster of the indicated blossoms and fitted them to the purchaser's lappel.

Austin Carr grinned unpleasantly.

"Quite a treat, this," he assured her; "and how have you concealed yourself? I had almost abandoned the idea of stumbling upon you once more."

"I'm in the work-room," rejoined Eunice, pinning the carnations dexterously. "Mr. Randegger wanted me down to-day because he was short-handed, but I make up, as a rule."

"Oh," said Mr. Carr, "with flowers, not grease-paint. If it's promotion I suppose I ought to congratulate you, but, by Jove, you don't deserve it. Not every man in my class would ask a girl in yours to marry him, and prove he was serious by offering her a ring worth fi—fifty pounds. I'll admit you declined the confounded thing, but I was a fool to swallow the snub—a dashed fool."

"Please," she begged, "don't. I—I didn't care for you, I don't think you cared for me—it was a mere fancy. Be sensible, Mr. Carr, you are going to marry Miss Warwick. I do hope you will be happy."

Austin Carr drew out a handful of silver and paid for his button-hole. "Yes," he conceded, with a hiccough, "Nita's accepted me; she's a daisy, is Nita, and she doesn't bore a fellow. But it was you I—loved, Eunice. Why did you say 'No'? The governor's a soft-hearted sort and he'd have forgiven me."

Mr. Carr stopped abruptly, staring past Eunice Hamilton. His querulous expression disappeared, he straightened himself and, waiving the formality of a farewell, moved off.

Eunice glanced in the same direction. A dainty figure had stepped from a cab at the pavement-edge to the shop-door. It was that of a woman, wearing a costly furred ulster and seal toque.

"Hullo, Austin!" she ejaculated; "what luck! You can buy me some roses—some Vilanelles. Paulette has disappointed me of a frock I was to sport at your governor's little feed this evening, and I must manage with an ancient turquoise abomination. So I need a few pink roses for the corsage, and the Vilanelles are the most recent miracle, besides being deliciously expensive."

She strode towards Eunice.

"Send me six or seven loose Vilanelle roses immediately," she said; "Miss Nita Warwick, Quantock House, Belgrave Square."

Eunice bowed and noted Miss Warwick's brief command. The Vilanelles were a pink rose of exquisite shape, blanched at the tips of the petals, and deepening to a splash of tawny crimson at their base. Austin Carr discharged the bill—it left him a florin out of a brace of gold coins.

"So nice of you!" declared Nita Warwick; "you shall be allowed to give me a cup of tea before I rush home to dress—a dinner to-night and a wedding to-morrow. I was born for excitement! Have you seen that bit in *The Gossip*? You'll have to settle with Sir Roland about us, Austin, or there'll be a shocking amount of talk."

The final sentence was delivered as they strolled out of the shop, but it reached Eunice, notwithstanding. Not that she noted its significance particularly. She had had recourse to the jewelled disc at her throat and was examining the miniature.

"It is not—it cannot be Mr. Carr," she murmured; "the date is too far back. And yet it is like him, rather."

Her reflections over the pictured countenance were interrupted by the crisp accents of her employer. Antonio Randegger had crossed unperceived, a note in his fingers.

"Miss Hamilton," he began, "some flowers were ordered for a dinner-party. They are gone, but there was a mistake in the office, and no one is booked to arrange them. All our decorators are out; you will have to fill the gap."

"Yes, sir," assented Eunice nervously; "I will do my best. When must I go?"

"At once," said the Italian; "I have told them to whistle a hansom—the flowers are at the house. The address is Grosvenor Gardens, Sir Roland Fanshawe's. He is a bachelor—Mrs. Dundas, his sister, is directing the dinner. Run and get ready, and do not quiver so much—bah, I trust you, let that be sufficient."

Eunice obeyed. As she mounted the gloomy flights which led to the workroom, she was wondering why the address given her a moment before should sound familiar.

The solution of the mystery flashed upon her. Sir Roland! it was the name mentioned by Miss Nita Warwick. Could the Sir Roland Fanshawe to whose residence she was bound, be identical with Miss Warwick's Sir Roland—the "governor," who must be informed of Mr. Carr's betrothal to Nita Warwick?

It seemed improbable. Mr. Randegger had intimated that Sir Roland Fanshawe was unmarried; if the other Sir Roland was Austin Carr's father, he must be Sir Roland Carr. Eunice left the problem unsolved, went down to the cab summoned for her, and drove off beneath the fall of the autumn dusk.

Sir Roland Fanshawe's mansion in Grosvenor Gardens was similar to its neighbours—large, sombre, stone-fronted. She dismissed the hansom and rang.

"I'm from Mr. Randegger, the florist," she explained to the servant, who acknowledged her peal; "I am to do the table decorations."

"Yes, miss," responded the man, and he piloted her

Involuntarily he sprang back, regarding her as if she had been a ghost.

through a luxurious hall into a lofty chamber, panelled with oak, and boasting a carved oak fireplace. An expanse of gleaming damask shone under the electric light, an ideal field for her operations.

Eunice passed in, unfastening her gloves. She brushed against an unseen obstacle—it was a massive vase, planted haphazard on the thick pile hearth-rug.

The footman rolled it to a corner.

"Sir Roland is changing the position of some pottery, miss," Eunice was notified; "he is a collector of rare china; we have pots in the house, miss (aye, and ugly brutes, too), worth thousands of pounds."

"Indeed!" observed Eunice, wisely declining further conversation on the point; "will you please fetch me the hampers that were brought this afternoon, and let Mrs. Dundas know that I have arrived?"

"Certainly, miss," said the servant, and vanished, with silent speed. Eunice, having removed her gloves, doffed her hat and jacket, and began to consider the task she had accepted. So absorbed did she grow that she did not perceive the entrance of a well-knit figure of middle height wearing a smoking-jacket, who carried in his arms a superb Sevres bowl.

A board creaked beneath his tread. Eunice spun about and the bearer of the bowl saw her. Involuntarily he sprang back, regarding her as if she had been a ghost. The priceless china escaped from his grasp, to be shivered at his feet.

Eunice gazed also, incredulous and astounded. For the face of the newcomer was the face of the miniature on her bosom.

CHAPTER II.

AN OLD LOVE'S POWER.

"MY dear Roland, what was the crash? Good Heavens, the Mazarin bowl! How did it happen?"

A smooth-skinned, dark-haired woman, graceful, stylish, and not without a degree of personal charm to balance the loss of her first youth, advanced into the dining-room where, a moment earlier, Eunice Hamilton had made such a singular discovery.

A stalwart figure, moving as if in a dream, stepped towards the questioner.

"Coralie," she was asked softly; "am I bereft of my senses, or is there someone else present—someone besides ourselves?"

The other glanced across the apartment and started. Eunice shivered to perceive how strangely she was being regarded.

"I'm afraid I surprised this—this gentleman," she stammered; "and—and caused an accident. I'm from Randegger's to do the table decorations; the footman showed me in here. Can I see Mrs. Dundas, please?"

"I am Mrs. Dundas," said the younger of the two intruders; "and you are the image of a—a lady my brother, Sir Roland Fanshawe, and I knew long since.

Pray excuse our agitation—the mishap to the bowl was, I am sure, not the least little bit your fault. Sir Roland must have been unnerved by your resemblance to our friend."

Roland Fanshawe caught at his sister's arm.

"Coralie," he murmured; "look, she is wearing the shield miniature I gave to——" He paused abruptly, his face white and his lips tremulous.

Mrs. Dundas drew nearer to the possessor of the ornament which had attracted her brother's attention.

"Will you tell me your name, my dear?" she inquired—Eunice noticed that she signed to Sir Roland as though to check his excitement. "And how you obtained the picture you have at your throat?"

"I am Eunice Hamilton," rejoined Eunice; "the miniature was my mother's; but, oh," she interrupted herself, "if only the vase had not been smashed; it was so beautiful, and must have been worth a great deal."

She stooped to the pieces—a simple, pathetic attitude.

Sir Roland gazed down at her.

"You—you say it *was* your mother's," he faltered; "is—is she dead?"

"Yes," answered Eunice sadly, halting in her attempt to fit the splendid fragments together; "she died at New Orleans a year ago."

"Pardon my apparent inquisitiveness, Miss Hamilton," said Roland Fanshawe—and his voice had grown hoarse and broken—"but that shield and portrait were a gift to a—a lady—a Miss Eunice Carruthers, who married a certain Wilfred Hamilton. Both were friends of mine—I take you to be their child."

"Father was Wilfred Hamilton," replied Eunice, "and I am called Eunice, after my mother—her maiden name was Carruthers."

"Mr. Hamilton," queried Sir Roland more collectedly, "is, I trust, living?"

Eunice shook her head.

"He died before I was sixteen," she explained; "mother never got over his death. She did not wish me to remain in the States, and when I was left alone—I have no brothers or sisters—I came to London, to some acquaintances of hers. They were not rich people, and they got me into Randegger's. I have never heard of you, Sir Roland, but yesterday I found this ornament among a lot of odds and ends. I recognised you from it as soon as I saw you, and oh, I am sorry about the bowl."

Roland Fanshawe raised her courteously.

"A fig for the bowl," he said. "I would have sacrificed a dozen such to bring about this meeting."

A light footfall sounded on the carpet—the servant had returned with a couple of neat hampers, lettered "Randegger." The shattered vase lay in his path; he stopped, astounded.

"Well," answered Sir Roland sharply; "can't you understand that there has been an accident? Have the mess brushed up. Why are you carrying those baskets about?"

"They are for me," put in Eunice; "the flowers I am to arrange."

"Nonsense!" cried Roland Fanshawe; "let one of the maids do it. Your parents, Miss Hamilton," he added, "were more to me than you can imagine—their daughter is an honoured guest beneath my roof."

Eunice Hamilton blushed.

"Mr. Randegger employs me," she objected; "and I must do my duty. Then I have not been trusted before with table decorations—I wanted to prove that I could manage them."

Sir Roland smiled; his grave features relaxed, and, despite the silver on his temples, looked as gay as his portrait in the shield at Eunice's throat.

"Your will is law," he responded. "Simmons, set down those hampers and clear away that broken china. Coralie, I owe Miss Hamilton an explanation for treating her as if she were a ghost. While she works (since she must be permitted to satisfy her conscience) I will tell her the true reason for the smashed bowl. Unless, of course, I shall interfere with her operations."

"N—not at all," said Eunice shyly; she had been studying the original of the miniature and felt herself (she knew not why) fascinated by his quiet earnestness and the distinction stamped upon his worn countenance. Also, she was curious as to the cause of his previous excitement.

Roland Fanshawe bowed his thanks and took up a position on the hearthrug, where he might watch the proceedings of the girl in whom he had betrayed such a peculiar interest.

Mrs. Dundas glanced from her brother to Eunice—a swift, penetrating scrutiny that lingered on each for a second.

"I hope to have a chat with Miss Hamilton myself," she observed, "when your explanation is completed, Roland. At present I must go and see about the wine for dinner."

She nodded kindly to Eunice and glided from the room. Eunice began to sort the contents of the hampers. Sir Roland, abandoning his station by the fire-place, had crossed the floor and leant upon a corner of the sideboard.

"Miss Hamilton," he said, "as a young man of twenty I knew and loved your mother, a girl of nineteen, yet even at that age beautiful, with a rare and striking beauty. The miniature you wear I had painted for her at a time whose memories I have not ceased to cherish; she accepted it, and with it the offer of my heart."

Eunice's brown orbs met those of Roland Fanshawe and dropped again.

"Your father," went on Sir Roland, "was my friend—a magnificent fellow, passionate, eloquent, brilliant; your mother made his acquaintance and learnt, in a flash, that she had never loved me. I guessed the secret, released her, and shot elephants in Africa till after they were married. A tempting appointment persuaded your father to sail for America—nor have I heard of him since. I believed him and his wife happy and prosperous, or I should have sought to aid them."

He contemplated the deft fingers of Eunice Hamilton; they were weaving into a delicate pattern on the expanse of rich damask thin strands of green creeper and the nipped-off stars of huge marguerite daisies, yellow as sunshine.

"I am now thirty-nine and a bachelor," pursued Roland Fanshawe, "so you will admit that I was hard hit, Miss Hamilton. You must be what your mother was at the period to which I have referred—a trifle over nineteen; you are her veritable counterpart. Judge of my emotions on beholding you so unexpectedly. You will fathom them the better if—as is no doubt the case—you care for some fortunate member of my sex, to whom you may or may not have plighted your troth."

Eunice devoted herself to the floral design on the damask.

"I fear I have neither of the qualifications," she said demurely.

Sir Roland lifted his brows.

"No!" he exclaimed; "has the masculine world lost its vision, or are you too exacting?"

"I'm going to send for a policeman and have everyone searched," said Mrs. Dundas.

"I can't say," answered Eunice, commencing to build round the mirror base of a towering epergne a bank of Neapolitan violets; "don't you think," she inquired, looking up suddenly, "that I ought to give you your picture back—mother must have forgotten?"

Roland Fanshawe regarded the ornament as it swung by a modest oxidised chain on Eunice's bosom.

"Why should you?" he queried; "it is favoured in being where it is. Pray suffer it to remain."

A soft scarlet warmed Eunice's cheeks, but she continued her task in silence. Down the middle of the table there had sprung up a device of green and yellow, varied by the darker centres of the great daisies. Eunice brought the epergne she had been decorating from the side-board to place it in position.

Sir Roland caught at it and they adjusted it together—their hands touching; Eunice felt that the palm in contact with hers quivered mysteriously.

"I can't realise you to be a stranger, Miss Hamilton," declared her companion; "you are the embodiment of a remembered face and form which I have kept hidden in my heart for what seems to be a lifetime. Your mother and I were boy and girl playmates—I used to call her Eunice, she to call me Roland—I was her brother, her confidant, her ally, till I wanted to be more."

He hesitated, to proceed reflectively.

"This house," he said, "is full of memories that have haunted it a long while. The night I discovered she loved your father—and—freed her to marry him, she had been dining here. I had taken her in—her gown was white and she had white flowers in her hair."

Roland Fanshawe checked himself. Eunice was gazing at him pitifully. Hitherto she had not seen a man under the influence of keen emotion. Sir Roland's sensitive, handsome features kindled a novel pang in her breast.

"*You* will stay and dine with me this evening?" he pleaded; "Miss Hamilton, I cannot allow you to refuse. I shall believe you a dream, a wraith, a phantom."

Eunice coloured.

"I—I am not fit," she demurred; "my—my dress!"

"What can that matter?" retorted Roland Fanshawe. "Only a few intimates of my sister's and mine are coming; we will say you have just arrived from the country, and that your trunks have gone astray. By Jove, have you hurt yourself?"

The little florist's grasp upon a stout stalk which she was breaking slipped, and her wrist grazed a projection of the silver mouldings on the tall epergne. It produced a shallow cut and the blood stained the skin about the wound.

Sir Roland tore a strip from his handkerchief and bandaged the injury with extravagant tenderness.

"Well, my dear Roland," desired a cheerful voice, "is Miss Hamilton sufficiently enlightened?"

Eunice started back. Mrs. Dundas had entered the room.

Her brother turned to her.

"Quite," he said; "but your pet epergne is responsible for Miss Hamilton receiving a nasty scratch. I have had to play the part of doctor. Coralie," he proceeded, interrupting Mrs. Dundas' expressions of sympathy, "persuade Miss Hamilton to remain and dine. I have suggested a convenient fib to account for her morning gown."

Mrs. Dundas shrugged her shoulders.

"Oh, you men!" she cried; "they have no real sense, have they, my dear? You must stop, there can be no question of that, but I can lend you a sweet frock I bought in Paris—before Society went into black. I've not worn it, and you're about my figure. I'll send my maid in a cab for it; if it requires altering she's a wonderful needlewoman. You mustn't say 'No'; it is a charming thing and entirely original, so it won't be out of fashion."

"Coralie, you're a genius," exclaimed her brother. "Miss Hamilton, you will stay?"

"Of course she will," responded Mrs. Dundas; "Roland you go and dress, the servants want to finish the table. I shall take charge of Miss Hamilton."

Roland Fanshawe moved towards the door; there was a strange light in his blue eyes as he looked back at the slender form under the glow of the electric lamps.

"If—if I were not forty!" he murmured to himself.

CHAPTER III.

A WOMAN'S WILE.

"AUSTIN, come here, I want to introduce you to a new friend of mine—Miss Hamilton, this young gentleman is my nephew and secretary, the son of a dear dead sister and the one responsibility with which the Fates have been pleased to charge me."

Roland Fanshawe had risen from a circular lounge in the middle of a luxurious drawing-room. The sombre black and immaculate white of his evening-dress set off a frame still active and symmetrical. By him was seated a little figure in creamy draperies of mousseline de laine, edged with lustrous gold fringe.

Mrs. Dundas' unworn gown from Paris had proved a veritable creation. It had changed Eunice Hamilton, the demure employee of Antonio Randegger, into a dainty being, all brown locks, bright eyes, and beautiful outlines. The scratch on her wrist was covered by a broad bracelet of pearls and rubies; from her delicate head to her slippered foot Eunice was a thing of tremulous loveliness.

Austin Carr responded languidly to the summons of his uncle; his glance travelled to the face of the woman beside Sir Roland and he recoiled. Eunice started up, flushing scarlet.

"You—you know each other?" asked Roland Fanshawe, struck by their demeanour.

"Y—yes," said Eunice nervously; "Mr. Carr has met me in—in business—he was at the shop to-day."

"Then it is you, Miss Hamilton?" gasped Austin Carr; "excuse my surprise. My dear uncle," he added, "won't you explain; was Miss Hamilton masquerading?"

"Practically," assented Sir Roland; "she is the child of Wilfred Hamilton, and—and a lady who was once very dear to me. She visited us—Miss Hamilton, that is—in the course of her professional duties, and we determined she should play at Cinderella, your aunt taking to the *role* of fairy godmother. Miss Hamilton, I must make you acquainted with a person in whom Austin has a peculiar interest—to wit, Miss Nita Warwick. That is she in the blue silk, speaking to Mrs. Dundas," and he led Eunice off across the splendid apartment.

Austin abandoned himself to reflection. He was disturbed by the rustle of flowing silks, and Nita Warwick sank down at his elbow.

"Well," she observed; "have you seen the Ugly Duckling that has turned into a swan?"

"The deuce!" he growled. "Yes, I can't fathom it."

Nita Warwick fluttered her feather fan. "She was sent from Randegger's to decorate the tables," Austin was told, "and Sir Roland, shifting his eternal pottery, noticed her, dropped three hundred pounds' worth of Sevres, voted it a bagatelle, and persuaded her to remain for dinner. Mrs. Dundas dressed her, and Sir Roland is fast losing his heart to Eunice the Second; you must have heard about that stupid romance of his."

Miss Warwick leant significantly towards her lover.

"Austin," she asked, "what do you propose to maintain me upon if your uncle acts the fool? I'm not inclined to face genteel starvation for the privilege of calling myself Mrs. Carr. We were sure Sir Roland was past the susceptible age, and that he would die a bachelor, after allowing you a comfortable income all his life. But this—this Miss Hamilton may ruin our chances."

"Perhaps the girl isn't genuine," said Austin Carr; "a show-up would nip the whole affair in the bud. We can only hope for the best. As for the governor, he'll stand no interference from me."

"Oh, his find's genuine enough," retorted Nita Warwick; "she has his portrait in a sort of locket—her mother's, the trinket was—Sir Roland gave it her twenty years ago. Don't you comprehend? He'll think it's destiny, and Miss Hamilton will fall a willing victim to your uncle's melancholy grace; look at them now, he worshipping her, she admiring him. Mrs. Dundas won't help us, she's infatuated, too—Eunice the First was a school-friend of hers. Miss Hamilton is wearing a superb ruby bracelet your aunt has lent her."

"Serve the meddlesome old cat right if she pinched it!" snarled Austin, slangily.

Nita Warwick looked at him.

"Austin," she whispered, "that's the very idea; they've never dreamt of inquiring into her character. If there were the least shadow cast on it, Sir Roland would be cured, and you would still be his heir. We may be over-anxious, but I fancy not. However, a stitch in time saves nine."

Her lover stared at her, alarmed.

"Nita!" he exclaimed; "you don't stick at trifles. But—but could it be done?"

Nita got up and shook her skirts into order.

"S—s—*sh*," she murmured; "don't you see how near Mrs. Dundas is. They are going in to dinner—I will think the matter over. You take me in, don't you?"

Her betrothed offered her his arm and they slipped into the impromptu procession that was passing through the door which opened on to the stairs. Sir Roland, evading any superior claims, was at the side of Eunice Hamilton.

During the stately meal he devoted himself to her as much as he might, and Austin Carr's brow grew darker and darker. There was a boyish light in his uncle's countenance, a gaiety in his bearing, a ring in his voice, that Austin had never marked before.

When the ladies rose, Nita Warwick stooped to her betrothed's ear.

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"Leave all to me," she bade him, "I have a plan."

And, permitting him no time to make a rejoinder, she followed the sweeping lace train of Mrs. Dundas. That personage had, unobserved, been watching her curiously. As Miss Warwick passed the retreating Eunice, she spoke to her, and they went out together. Roland Fanshawe gazed after the little figure in the creamy draperies and sighed.

When he entered the drawing-room, he glanced about it inquiringly. The gleam of yellow and white from a distant alcove showed him the whereabouts of Eunice Hamilton. He strolled towards the curtained niche, exchanging a word or two with his feminine guests. Scarcely had he reached it than the hangings parted and Nita Warwick stepped forth—her fan half-folded in her palms.

"Ah, Sir Roland," she said, with veiled malice, "are you in search of Miss Hamilton? She is here, resting, we have been discussing—table decorations."

A ripple of curious merriment broke from her as she passed him. She had arrested, by a meaning glance, the attention of Austin Carr. The latter altered his course and moved towards her.

Roland Fanshawe frowned.

"What a world of snobs!" he muttered; "a woman who could not earn an honest sou to save her life, sneers at one who supports herself by an honourable avocation. Bah! and Austin, they tell me, is enamoured of Miss Nita. Well, each to his taste!" And Sir Roland stepped into the recess.

Nita Warwick gained her lover's side—the smile lingering about her mouth.

"I have something for you," she said, "under my fan. I cannot hide it myself."

"Nita," he whispered; "you—you haven't done it?"

"Oh, I got the thing easily enough," laughed Nita; "it was too large for her. I touched the spring as her wrist lay on the seat by me. I was praising Sir Roland, and she had only thoughts for that. Here, rid me of the nuisance."

Austin Carr trifled with the ends of the ostrich feathers which formed her fan, and she pushed into his fingers Mrs. Dundas' ruby bracelet. He covered it dexterously and slid it into his vest pocket.

There was a step close to them—it was a servant tendering the inevitable coffee-cups. Nita took one, Austin Carr waved the footman away, and they retreated to a lounge not far from the curtained alcove in which Nita Warwick brought off such a momentous coup.

At that instant the rattle of hangings flung by startled them. Roland Fanshawe had tossed back the curtains of the niche behind them, so that the rays from the principal chandelier might illuminate it. Within the recess Eunice was apparently searching.

"Missed!" said Austin, under his breath. "Now to see how he views the situation."

Sir Roland had motioned to his sister. She disengaged herself from a group of his guests and crossed the room.

"Coralie," murmured Roland Fanshawe; "Miss Hamilton is in despair—she has lost a certain bracelet of yours. But it cannot be more than mislaid, for she is confident she had it when she entered this alcove with Miss Warwick a few moments ago. It was rather wide for her wrist, and has doubtless dropped off unnoticed."

Mrs. Dundas made a contemptuous gesture.

"And you believe that," she cried; "a bracelet worth eighty guineas. Absurd! I should send for a policeman and frighten it out of her; after all what do we know of the girl?"

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed her brother; "you are mad, speak low—she will hear you. You are wrong. I would answer for the child with my life."

It was too late. Eunice had heard; she issued from the recess pallid and horrified. Mrs. Dundas signed imperatively to Austin—her threat had reached his ears—he sprang up and hastened to her.

"Mrs. Dundas," faltered Eunice, "you—you don't imagine I lost it on purpose—stole it?"

"No—no!" declared Roland Fanshawe; "she is excited, unnerved, she does not mean to hurt you."

"I don't care who I hurt," said Mrs. Dundas, with curious heat; "I'm going to send for a policeman and have everyone searched."

She put out a plump white hand and dropped it on her nephew's; he had lifted it involuntarily towards the pocket where he had concealed the vanished article. Mrs. Dundas gripped his arm.

"I feared so," she remarked; "Roland, you may deal with this miserable boy. He has my bracelet in his possession. I saw Nita Warwick give it to him—she is wearing diamonds only, and the glitter of the rubies puzzled me. This then, Austin, is what you were plotting—this is the stitch in time that was to save nine; this is the shadow that was to be cast on Miss Hamilton's character."

Roland Fanshawe had turned white and his jaw set. He held out an open palm mutely. Austin, his eyes lowered, drew out the bracelet, gave it up, and slunk away. Mrs. Dundas caught at the jewel, stepped to the bell, pressed the electric button, and moved to Nita Warwick, who had been a covert spectator of this little drama.

"Miss Warwick," she said, displaying the ornament, "I have taken the liberty of ordering your carriage; fortunately, I believe, you came alone, so I am spared consideration for some innocent guest of my brother's."

Nita stared at the golden circlet a second, rose, bowed stiffly, and, without a word, glided towards the door; Austin followed her, but she shot a disdainful glance at him.

"Bungler!" she hissed, and, shutting her fan with a click, passed out and was gone. Mrs. Dundas, with gentle fingers, was clasping the ruby bracelet upon the wrist of Eunice Hamilton.

"But I don't understand," murmured Eunice.

Sir Roland, with a grateful touch upon his sister's hand, answered the objection.

"It is not necessary that you should," he answered banteringly. He gained the side of his nephew and added, in a guarded tone.

"Yours was not the mind to conceive or the audacity to execute such a villainous trick. The reason for it I will not ask—it would be an insult to myself and others. I will speak to you later. Come, Miss Hamilton, we will resume our conversation." And he led her back into the alcove.

Nita Warwick's selfish vision had seen into the future clearly enough. Sir Roland did grow to believe that "it was destiny," that the second Eunice was meant to console him for the loss of the first. And Eunice found, when she was asked, that she shared the conviction.

Austin Carr disappeared from his club and the West End. The last news of him reported him to be ranching in California. He may or may not have been informed that at the wedding of Eunice Hamilton and Roland Fanshawe, one of the prettiest gifts was a ruby pendant. It was composed of the stones out of the famous bracelet, reset.

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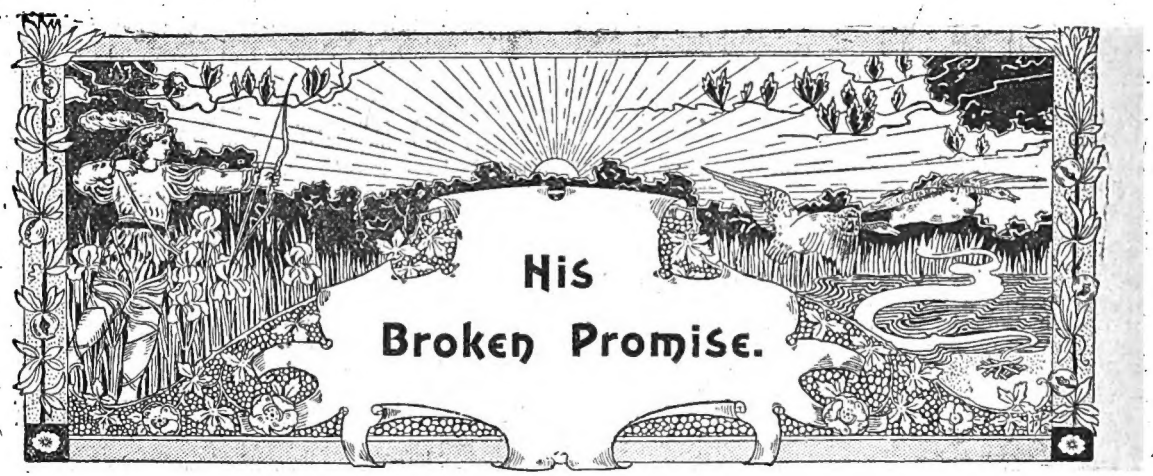

NEAR the close of a September day, as the sun in its dying splendour was tinting with rosy hues the dingy sails of a solitary fishing schooner, there floated from the weather-beaten rocks the words of a song. The singer had apparently forgotten that he was there at this picturesque trysting-place to meet the "dearest girl in the world," and, as though inspired by the panorama of gorgeous colourings of sky and ocean had begun singing:

Three fishers went sailing out into the west,
Out into the west when the sun went down——

The song abruptly ended as over the rocks climbed a girlish figure, who a moment later was clasped in the arms of the singer, Duncan Gray, but instead of the usual roguish smile a pale, frightened face looked up at him.

"Dora, you are ill!" he exclaimed in alarm.

"No," came the answer from the trembling lips, "it was my dream. All day I could not forget it. Such a dreadful dream."

"Why, dear, I did not think you would allow yourself to be so disturbed by a dream. But tell me about it."

"Oh, I thought I sat here on this very ledge, but alone, and the waves were pounding and beating against the rocks. Such dark, angry waves, and then——" she shivered with the memory, "then I saw you appear among those tossing foam-crested waves, and your face was as white as death. I cried out to you, but you did not hear me. I reached down, thinking to save you when a wave should sweep up nearer, when a mighty wave rolled up, whose spray left me drenched and blinded for a moment, and after it had receded I looked for you in vain and then found myself awake and shuddering with fear, the fear that it might be presentiment. Oh, can it mean that some danger awaits you?"

"You foolish little girl," he interrupted, attempting to allay her almost hysterical sobbing, "don't let your mind dwell upon such thoughts."

"But promise me you will be most careful and avoid all danger, for my sake."

"You may rest assured," he smilingly replied, "that suicide is at present the farthest from my intentions."

"Do not jest, but tell me you will in every way possible preserve yourself from danger. It was so real that you were lost to me! You will promise, won't you, please?" she pleaded.

"What is it I am to promise?" queried Duncan.

"That you will avoid any action that could result in disaster to you."

"Why, then, I promise; promise to do whatever lies within my power to divert any calamity that would for one moment grieve my little Dora."

"Oh, thank you!" she cried, clinging to him as though she were not quite sure that his promise had saved him from some inevitable peril.

* * * *

On a cold, grey morning, four months later, the wind began at an early hour to moan dismally along the rocky shore; by noon it had increased to a gale, accompanied by snow, and long before twilight a storm in all its fury was besieging the little fishing hamlet.

Three wives sat up in the lighthouse tower,
And they trimmed the lamps as the sun went down;
They looked at the squall and they looked at the shower,
And the night rack came rolling up ragged and brown;
But men must work and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden and waters deep,
And the harbour bar be moaning——

Sang Dora as she finished her last domestic duties of the day.

"How glad I am that my Duncan is not one of the poor sailor boys to-night," she added to herself, as, before seating herself with her mother she ran and peered from the little window against which the snow was steadily beating.

Yes, there was Duncan, almost at the door—but who was with him? Dora hastened to admit them to the light; but only Duncan entered, calling to his companion, who was fast disappearing in the darkness, "Will be with you directly." Then to the astonished Dora he hastily explained: "A vessel on the point is signalling for help, and Joe is picking up men to go to her relief. Sorry I can't stay with you."

A terrible thought crosses her mind—her dream of not long ago—and quickly clasping her hands upon his arm she said, with face pale in its intensity: "You must not go."

"Not go!" was his astonished reply. "I should have supposed you would urge me to go to the relief of those who are in such distress."

"Duncan," she responded, in tones whose calmness was belied by the terror depicted in her face, "you must not go, for I know now it was of this that I dreamt."

"Dora, can you think of those suffering souls out there and permit such superstitions to bar me from rendering them assistance?"

"How can I let you go?" came from the quivering lips, "when I know you are going to your death?"

Firmly he unclasped the clinging fingers from his arm and with a hearty "Good-bye, Dora," his hand was upon the latch.

With a cry she attempted to spring between the door and him whose life she was striving to reclaim before it was too late. His strong arm caught her, held her for one moment, and then gently brushed her away. Suddenly a glad light—a light of hope—shone in her eyes.

"Your promise," she exclaimed, "your promise to me that you would not imperil your life—you surely remember, and that promise you will keep."

"My promise," he answered; "I do remember, but that promise I must break."

Like a statue carved in marble stood Dora, and in a voice of befitting coldness came the words: "Then Duncan Gray, I love you no more! I hate you!"

"Dora," he gasped as his face grew pale, "surely you are not conscious of what you say."

In the same cold, even tones came the response: "I retract not a word."

The door opened, letting in a great cloud of snow, which the shrieking wind was driving along in its fury, immediately closed, and Duncan passed on through the storm, half-dazed and hardly realising what had occurred.

The men who had been summoned were surprised at his delay, but there was no time to explain. Had there been a suspicion, however, in any mind, of his unwillingness to attend them on their perilous mission, such thought was instantly dispelled when it was noticed with what energy and daring he threw himself into the work of launching the life-saving boat, and the almost superhuman strength with which he handled the oars.

One boat load was brought to shore in safety, and it was necessary to return for those who still remained aboard the now fast-sinking ship. They had almost succeeded in launching her for the second trip, when a tremendous wave swept in, hurling boat and brave life-savers back on the beach to try all over again. In spite of the thunders of the storm old Joe swore to himself that he heard a groan from one of his companions with whom he was working so desperately.

"Well, I don't much blame yer for cavin' in," said he; "it's a terrible rough night."

"Bother the night," replied Duncan; "I sprained my wrist when that last big wave smashed us up so."

"Ho, men!" shouted Joe, "Might's well let up—Duncan's broke his arm. Have to let those other fellows out there go to Davy Jones' locker."

"Hold on," cried Duncan, "I have one arm left. Now then, shove her off. And though maddened with pain, he was again with them, fighting their way to those half-frozen, despairing victims of the wreck. They had secured the last man and were again making their way to shore when one oar suddenly stopped its brave work, and Duncan, unconscious from pain, fell, and from hoarse throats came the cry, "Man overboard!"

For a second only did despair possess those heroic hearts, then rescued turned rescuers. Those who were not too benumbed by their long exposure on the doomed vessel gave a hand, and after a severe battle with the waves Duncan's inanimate form was recovered, and the shore was gained where the exhausted ones were soon cared for.

Through the blinding storm a little muffled figure crept up to Joe and inquired in a voice which was half a moan: "Duncan—where is he?"

"'Spec' they carried him home," came the thoughtless response, as in wonderment he flashed his lantern into the face of the inquirer. For an instant he saw the white face with eyes dilated in the agony of comprehension of the dreadful truth, then, without a cry, without a sound, she fell at his feet in the drifted snow.

All that night lights burnt in one cottage home, where loving hands worked unceasingly to restore to consciousness him who had so nearly lost his own life in saving the lives of others, and when that long, dark night had vanished and with it the storm, leaving portions of a wreck scattered out on the shining sands, in the morning gleam as the tide went down, the tired eyes slowly opened and a look of recognition came into them, dispelling the terrible anxiety of those who had through the creeping hours watched for signs of returning life, and filling with hope the heart of the weary-eyed, forlorn little Dora, who dropped by the bedside with a cry of joy.

A troubled expression passed over his features, and with an effort he murmured: "My promise—I broke my promise—can you forgive me?"

"Oh, Duncan," she sobbed, "it is I that am to be forgiven."

A. T. Y.

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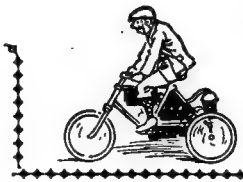

A Terrible Ride.

"HERE, Fitz, I wish you would serve this writ on Old Man Brown," said the Sheriff, just as he was starting for home at the close of business one day. "He may kick at first, but don't mind that. Just hold on, and he'll soon cool down. Go six miles east and eight south. Small, unpainted house, and big, red barn. You can't miss it. With your locomotive you ought to be back easily before dark."

The writ in question was notice of a judgment recently obtained from the county court against "Old Man Brown." Fitz took the paper with some little pride as representing his first independent mission, and with no suspicion of the possibilities involved in it. He had been in the bush but a short time, and a few days before this had been appointed deputy pro tem. to the Sheriff, who was his older brother. The "locomotive" was a motor-bicycle which he had brought with him from the West, and was the idol of his heart.

Now, "Old Man Brown" was a character. He owned a fine farm in a clearing, well stocked and well kept up. He had implicit confidence in the efficacy of lightning rods, and it was this belief that led more or less directly to the adventure we are now to tell.

Some months before a travelling peddler had convinced the old farmer that his barn required better protection, and had sold him some rods. By a familiar device the contract was so printed that by proper trimming a promissory note was left. This had been negotiated, and when time of payment came was held by an innocent purchaser who had no difficulty in securing upon it.

Brown was furious. He swore he never would pay the note, and, what was more, would kill any one who tried to serve notice of the judgment. This was the alarming situation into which Fitz was about to thrust himself unknowingly!

Fitz got to Brown's. He found him with his men busy threshing. He served the writ. The next moment he found himself flat on his back under the "old man," who was doing his best to throttle him. The "hands" gathered around to enjoy the sight, until one of the men evolved a brilliant idea, and exclaimed: "I tell you what, fellows! Let's tie him to his steam engine and start him home flying. We'll not hurt him, and if he should meet any accident between here and town it's not our fault."

The proposition was adopted with a hurrah. Before he fairly realised their intention the young man was bound firmly in the saddle, with an extra turn or two of rope about the upper tube of the diamond frame by way of additional security. His hands were placed on the handle bars and securely fastened there with cords about the wrists. Then each foot was tied firmly to one side of the "fork," and his bonds were complete. Thus trussed he was wheeled out to the road, escorted by an enthusiastic mob which included all the people of the place.

All being ready, the engine was started slowly, while two men, one on each side, supported the rider—first walking, then running, and finally letting him go with a tremendous shove. At the same instant the valve which controlled the supply of petrol was opened wide, and the machine set out at a lively pace on its journey. The impulse of the final shove had taken Fitz out into the surrounding open country, away from the travelled road. There were slight inequalities in the hard soil, and numerous tree stumps helped to make bicycle riding anything but easy, especially at high speed.

In a very few minutes Fitz had received such a shaking up as he had not imagined possible on such a conveyance. His teeth chattered and his head began to ache, as well as his back. To make matters worse it was growing dark. Unless he could be stopped in some way there was no prospect that the petrol would become exhausted and the machine stop of its own accord in much less than two hours.

After the first few minutes he had lost entirely the sense of direction, and could not be sure even of where the road lay. All he could do was to keep his balance, steer clear of serious obstructions, and trust to fortune to bring him out of the scrape. He had little hope of help from any one he might meet or overtake, for with the best intentions in the world one would find it hard to help a man flying across wild, open country, at fifteen miles an hour.

At last he came to a road, and turned into it at the imminent risk of capsizing. Like many roads through the bush, this had been made only by use—that is, no roadway had been built, but its course over the surface of the bush had been fixed by common consent and a common direction. By the repeated passing of waggons, always drawn by two horses, the wheel-tracks had been worn into deep ruts, leaving between them a ridge a foot and a half or two feet wide and of the same height as the level of the ground outside. A common bicycle would have fared badly in one of these ruts, because its pedals would have been constantly striking one side or the other, and would have been bent or broken. Fitz, however, had had pedals and cranks removed from his motor machine, and had he been free to manage it as usual he would have had little or no trouble in guiding it in the rut. Now, however, cramped by his position and unnerved by the shaking up he had received, and bothered furthermore by the darkness which prevented his seeing the road clearly, he had little control over his wheel.

As a consequence it "wobbled," striking now one side and then the other of the narrow rut with a horrible, grinding, tearing sound. Suddenly the ground seemed to give way beneath him, and, with a sensation like that felt in a rapidly descending lift, Fitz found himself plunging downward into some dark abyss. Then came a rush and a splash, and the machine was tearing uphill instead of down. Nothing had happened, after all, except the road just there forded one of the deep narrow creeks which abound in the bush. One more element, however, had been added to the rider's discomfort, for though the water was not deep, he had been thoroughly drenched by the splashing as he dashed through, and in the cold night air he soon became chilled to the bone.

Occasionally a solitary farmhouse was passed, and a little later he dashed into and through a small village. Then he skirted a barbed wire fence that tore his clothes

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and skinned his right side. Then came a very uneven piece of ground, anew testing his ability to maintain his equilibrium. But now, from cold, weariness, and nervous strain, Fitz was hardly conscious. Almost automatically he kept his balance, but as to direction, he could only let the machine have its own way. Often he imagined the speed slackening, but as often found that this was due to an up-grade, and that when the summit was reached a new burst of speed followed.

Very fortunately, no more fences or creeks had been met, but now a dangerous spot was near, and the bicycle in its mad career was fast approaching it. These so-called creeks are small streams that wind their way across the bush, into which they cut deep channels. One had been passed already, and at a point where the road dipped down into it, and made the passage comparatively easy. Now another was just in front, and the bicycle was approaching it where the bank was sheer. Fitz saw the danger when it was too late, and, attempting to turn aside on the very brink of the dark chasm, he only succeeded in plunging into it diagonally instead of at right angles. There was a dizzy sensation of falling, a violent shock, a blinding flash, and the hot breath of flame, —and then unconsciousness.

When he came to himself again, it was growing light. It seemed to him that every joint was aching and every nerve tingling with a separate pain of its own. He was half-lying, half-sitting in the water, which almost wholly covered his body. The violence of the fall had wrenched one hand free from its bonds, but at the same time had sprained the wrist, which now was badly swollen and discoloured.

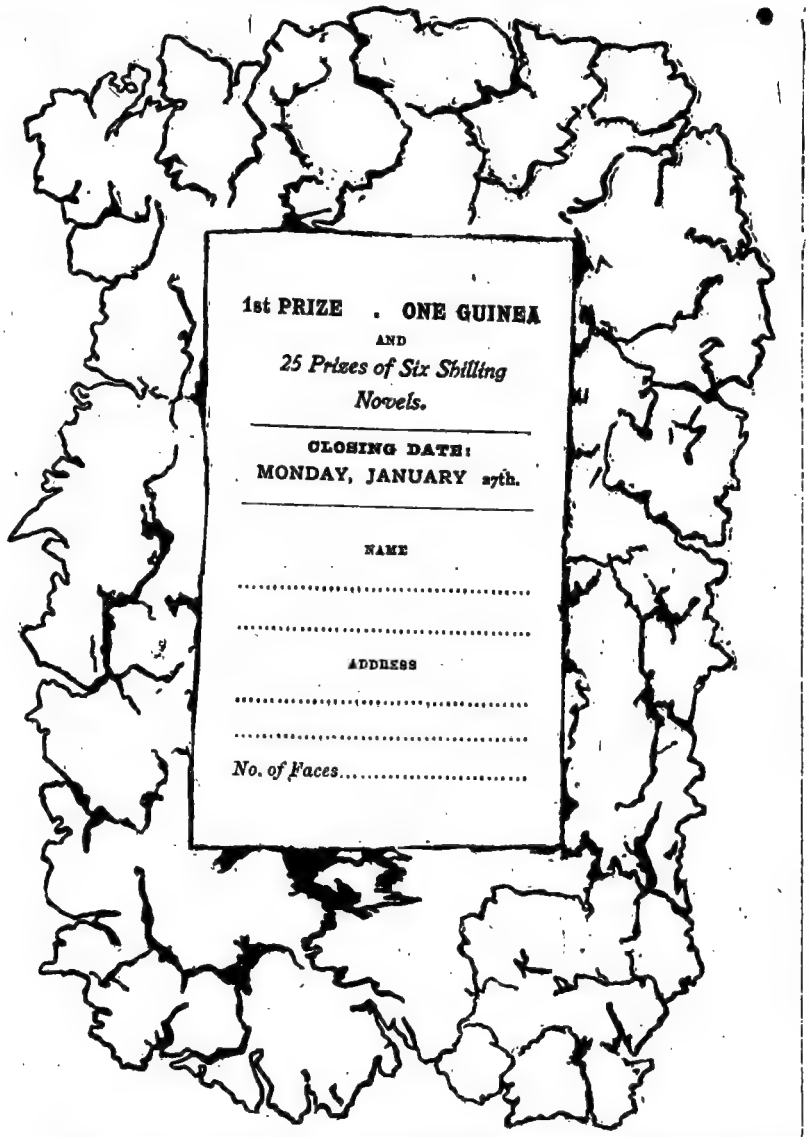
With infinite difficulty and much suffering, he succeeded in drawing his knife from his pocket, and with it cutting the cords that bound his feet, and held him in the saddle. Even then it was some time before he could rise and stand, or even straighten out his aching limbs.

Then he surveyed himself, and a piteous spectacle he saw! Clothing was torn, scorched, and saturated with muddy water; hair and moustache were singed: flesh torn by the barbed wire, and burnt and blistered by the explosion; and every joint chilled and numb from the long immersion in the water. After a time he found a place where he could climb to the top of the high bank, and fortunately saw a hut not far away. Thither he struggled, and there spent many days in recovering from the injuries and nervous shock.

"Old Man Brown" finally had to pay the judgment and so Fitz's first official errand was not in vain.

SAM STYLE.

Facemaking Puzzle.



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The eyes must be marked in ink, and the total number of faces made must be put in the space provided for that purpose.

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The Editor's decision is final, and competitors must only enter on that understanding.

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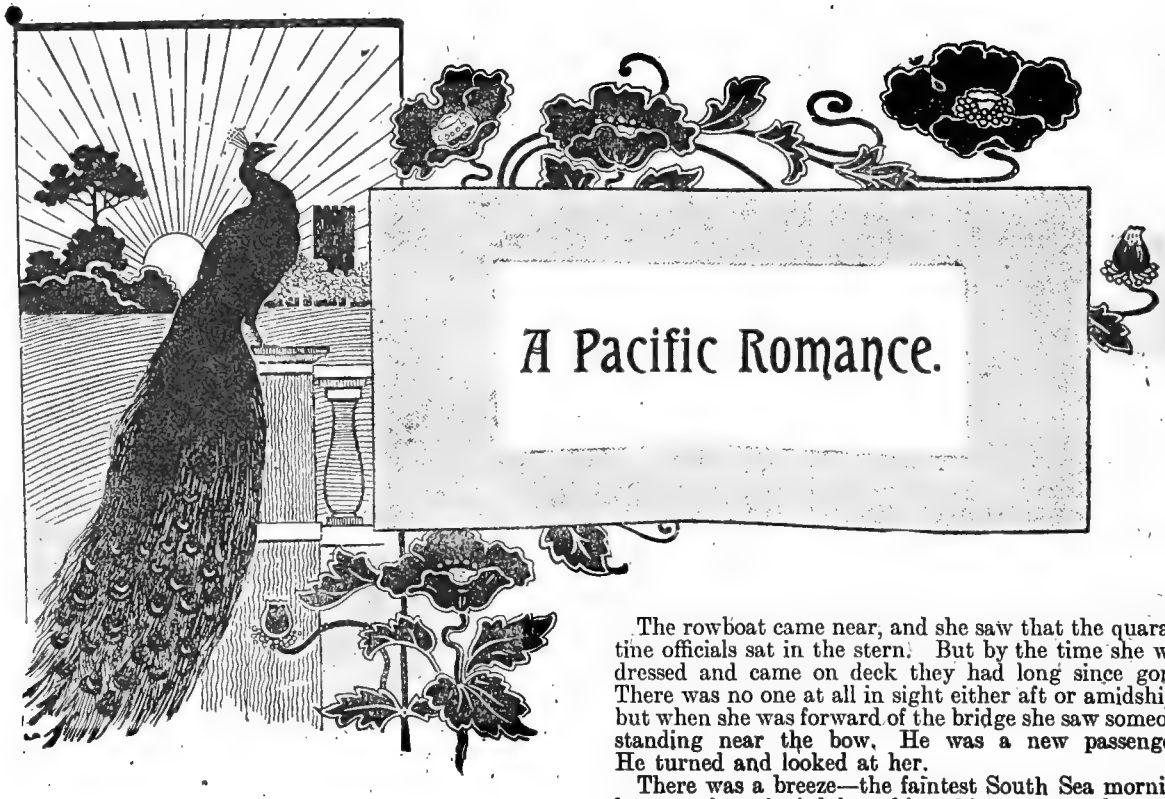

A Pacific Romance.

By all the laws of the true romance she should have felt upon opening her eyes a premonition that this was to be a day of destiny. But she merely felt that the engines had stopped, that the ship was at anchor, and that, therefore, it was moistly, insufferably warm. The curtains across the state-room windows did not so much as move. She came down from her berth and pulled them aside. The coast of Guatemala was before her—and the port of San José.

There had been rain in the night, a tropical shower. The clouds were lifting away. They were massed in white and gold behind the two volcano peaks that had sent forth the one fire, the other water, in their time. And the peaks themselves were side by side, two cones of glowing pink.

They were miles inland, many miles, and the thick, luxuriant tropical green was between, reaching to the curve of the sand. There were some white houses by the beach—white, with red tiles. They made the port of San José. But the ship was anchored well out in deep water, and there were no craft in sight, save a rowboat or two drawn up on the sand, and one that was starting out from the pier across the faint blue water that showed back the clouds of white and gold. The wake and the oars glistened in the new sunlight.

The girl leant her bare arm on the sill and stood looking out. She had seen many beautiful things in her life, but never any so lovely as the coast and volcano peaks of San José de Guatemala at the break of day.

The rowboat came near, and she saw that the quarantine officials sat in the stern. But by the time she was dressed and came on deck they had long since gone. There was no one at all in sight either aft or amidships, but when she was forward of the bridge she saw someone standing near the bow. He was a new passenger. He turned and looked at her.

There was a breeze—the faintest South Sea morning breeze—that rippled her thin white gown and moved the loose tendrils of her hair. He raised his straw hat civilly and turned back to his consideration of the shore. Presently the purser joined him, and he stood talking, his hands jammed into his coat pockets, and his tan-shod feet wide apart on the deck. Then he went into the saloon.

That was all Miss Strathmore saw of nim, but she described him to her mother accurately, nevertheless.

"He's the only foreigner I ever saw who looked as though he could do things—and not talk about it afterwards. His skin is very white and his hair is black. His nose is big and his jaw shuts hard. And, moreover—though his eyes are brown, they are neither sparkling nor soft"—she objected to both—"they are level and hard. That he may speak English is my fondest wish."

He did. He was put beside her at breakfast, and the captain presented him. His name was Merida.

"You saw me this morning," he said, "when I was looking back upon 'my house, my home, my heritage, my lands.'"

"And 'the laughing dames in whom you did delight?'" she followed it up.

He gave her a quick look. "Perhaps," he said, and abruptly turned to talk to the man at the other side, a little Chilian whom Miss Strathmore did not like. They talked Spanish together, and she could not understand. So she ate her breakfast and wondered why the Guatemalan should have objected to having his quotation finished out. Had she hit some nail too neatly on the head? He had risked that. But he knew his Byron, apparently, and his English had not

so much as an accent. If there was to be any further conversation, it lay with him to begin it. He did so presently, but he kept to generalities, and refused to be drawn out about himself.

The captain was more communicative on the subject later on. He belonged to the general seadog type.

"Better make up to young Merida, Miss Elizabeth," he advised, coming to a stop in front of her deck chair; "he owns about everything in sight over there," his arm swept the view of dense green from the beach curve to the mountains far away. "Half Guatemala belongs to his brother and him. The brother is married—to a Spanish princess, too—but he's not, and you'll do the best two weeks' work you ever did in your life if you catch him between here and 'Frisco Bay."

The captain liked the topic, evidently. He drew up a stool and sat down to pursue it further, going from the jocose to the serious.

He could recommend Matcho Merida. He wasn't like the rest of these Black and Tans.

"He's made this trip with me six times now, and I've watched him close. He doesn't go in for the things that most of his breed do—cards and women and wine." (Miss Strathmore thought of her quotation.) "We get the chance to see things on these ships, you may be sure, but I've never seen Merida do a silly thing yet. It may be because he's been to school in England, and runs the New-York end of affairs, but whatever the reason is, it's so. And educated!" he added, awe-inspiredly, "why, that fellow speaks four languages as well as he does his own—and got something to say in all of them. You take heed of what I say, Miss Elizabeth. I knew your father when I was a boy, and the best I could wish for his daughter would be to marry young Merida." He stood up and started off. "Here he comes now. Get him to tell you how he and the other young bloods held the Governor's palace against a revolutionist mob for a day and a night. Make up to him."

Which—the advice and the strategy—had the natural effect of rendering Miss Strathmore more than barely civil to Merida when he stopped to speak to her. He had changed the suit in which he had come on board, and was in white flannels now.

"He's not handsome," she decided, remembering the regular features of other Spanish blooded men she had known, "but he's quite the smartest individual I ever saw."

He pulled up a wicker chair beside her, and they began to talk. It was ten o'clock then. They were still talking when the luncheon gong sounded at one. They went down together, and talked through the meal.

If Miss Strathmore had been stupid she would have stayed on deck the rest of the afternoon. As it was she went to the cabin for a nap, and then devoted herself—the least in the world, obviously—to her mother, until dinner-time. But there was the evening after that. They spent it together in the bow and talked—of the phosphorescence of the water and things.

It was not until after a good many nights that they got to anything much more personal. Then it came all at once. Merida stood wedged into the extreme point of the bow, and Miss Strathmore sat half-over-hanging the black ocean when the prow cut into gold light. She was holding fast to a stay. She could just see Merida's face in the starlight, and his eyes were on her steadily.

There had been a stop in speech.

"Was I uncivil when you finished my line for me, that night?" he asked.

"Rather," Miss Strathmore answered him.

"And you didn't know why, I suppose?"

She admitted that she did not.

"Well," he explained, "it's just this. I get so sick of having people go on the basis that all men down here are Don Juans, and all that. We get far too much of it."

She reminded him that he had laid himself open to it.

"I know I did. But one doesn't expect an American or an Englishman to know his poets—if you don't mind my saying so. I never thought about your going on." There was a pause. "And I don't go in for women and flirtations," Merida said. "I have never cared for any girl except you."

It was sudden, certainly—so sudden that she let go her hold on the stay. His hand went out to steady her instantly. Then he took it away.

"I suppose you are surprised," he said. "I am myself. But it's true."

Miss Strathmore's self-possession had weathered many experiences, but foundered at this. She could not think of anything to say.

"I don't want to bother," he told her, "and I don't expect you to like me yet—but I hope you will—before long." Then he went off to other things, but conversation was not a success.

They were at anchor off Mazatlan the next day, some two miles out beyond the bar. Merida put in his appearance at breakfast in shore clothes.

"I'm going to land," he told Miss Strathmore, "if the captain will have a boat whistled for me."

"It's rough," she tried to suggest.

"I know it is," he answered, levelling his eyes straight on her for the benefit of all who might choose to see, so that she flushed very pink. "If it were not I should ask you and your mother to go, too." They had done it at Acapulco and Manzanillo before.

"I will not go," observed the Chilian; "it is too much danger to."

Merida caught Miss Strathmore's glance of contempt and nearly smiled.

Towards the middle of the morning a rowboat, whose owners were courageous, responded to the signals and ventured out to the ship. Merida went down the ladder. The captain watched him.

"You'll come to grief, Matcho, if you don't look out. See that your men aren't drunk when you start back. It's pretty bad now, but it'll be rolling like fun then. We hoist anchor at three," he added, warningly.

Merida watched his chance to jump. He caught it expertly, and the boat pulled away.

It was two o'clock when it reappeared, coming slowly, hidden in a hollow, climbing a crest, flung about through the frothing bar. Miss Strathmore and the captain and a good many others were watching it. Miss Strathmore had been shooting at driftwood and at a big turtle that was floating on its back in the sun. The captain had been watching her. The turtle was a shifting and difficult mark, but she had hit it three times, and then a boat had put out to bring it in.

"We'll have turtle steaks to-morrow," said the captain; "you're a pretty good shot."

But she had had enough of the amusement, and they were leaning idly against the rail. The captain reverted to Merida.

"Did Matcho tell you about the palace?" he asked.

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"He won't," she answered; "he says he's forgotten it."

"He isn't a great talker. Hasn't told you about the girl down below on the spardeck, either, I suppose?"

She shook her head.

"Well," said the captain, "she's a little Indian from one of his plantations down there—pretty little thing, too. It seems she's in love with him and he won't look at her. So what does she go and do but scrape the money together somehow and take steerage passage and follow him. She came on at San José, but he never knew she was aboard until after we got off the Guatemalan coast. She's a shy one—and sharp. Then one day when he was down with the doctor looking at the hospital she showed herself, clasped his knees and wept, and all the rest of it—made the dickens of a row. He acted very well, but it put him in a ticklish kind of place. Of course we won't let her up here, and he's particularly careful to keep off the spardeck now. He's going to ship her back from 'Frisco, he says." He pointed to the back of a black-haired head that appeared over the side directly below them. "That's her." Evidently the eyes in the head were watching the boat too."

"She's seen you with him, and she doesn't like you a little bit," the captain chuckled. "She calls you names."

Miss Strathmore did not think it amusing at all. The rowboat was near. Miss Strathmore met Merida's eye.

"He'll have a scramble of it getting up," the captain opined.

The ship was rolling heavily.

"And his Mexicans," said the captain, uneasily; "by Heaven, they're half-drunk, too. Look at their eyes."

Whether it was that or not, it was certain that they could not seem to manage to keep the boat alongside long enough for Merida to catch the platform, when the ship rolled down.

"Take your time, Merida," the chief engineer called to him—"take your time."

Apparently the word suggested something to Merida. He put his hand to his watch-pocket—and then his face changed. There were three Mexicans in the boat, but only two of them had rowed; the other had been sitting near him in the stern, steering occasionally with an oar. Merida said something to this one. The fellow looked too innocent and shook his head. Things happened quickly after that. Merida caught the man by the arm, and that began the fight. The rowers shipped their oars, and, urged by the excitement and the tequilla, which they had drunk, joined in. The boat pitched and plunged.

"They'll kill him," the captain called out. "Lower away a boat."

"If they've no knives"—began the purser. But as he said it a knife was thrown, and by the little Indian girl on the deck below.

The captain swore one oath. "They'll do him now—certain," he said.

Merida had his man by the throat, but he was down, and all three were atop of him. One of them jumped up and caught the knife by the handle as it came, dexterously. He gave it to the man who had Merida under him, and the other two drew back. A splendid brown arm, with its hand grasping the knife, rose high and poised above Merida's breast. Then it fell—but uselessly, limp from the shoulder-bone. There was smoke in the muzzle of the revolver in Miss Strathmore's hand.

Merida threw the wounded Mexican off, bent over him, felt in his sash, and drew out his own watch. The rowers had resumed their oars.

"Now," said Merida, quietly, "you take me alongside."

The little Indian on the spardeck had watched it eagerly, hanging out far over the side. She turned now, twisting around lithely upon her back, her face upturned. Her dark eyes glowed, her lips apart. Miss Strathmore, the revolver still in her hand, was straight above. The Indian threw back her head further still, and then laughed. Her right hand went to her forehead, and came away again with a sweep, in mock salute—the salute of the matador who has missed his stroke and forsakes the ring.

A. W. N.

RESULT OF THE "BRAIN GYMNASIUM," Nos. 1—6.

The first prize of £1 1s. has been awarded to Mrs. E. Robinson, of 60 Sherrard Road, Forest Gate, E., whose attempt was the first correct one dealt with.

Pencil-cases have been sent to:

H. Robinson, 60 Sherrard Road, Forest Gate.
J. J. Robinson, 60 Sherrard Road, Forest Gate.
Miss M. Ryan, 21 Abbotts Road, East Ham.
J. S. Ryan, 21 Abbotts Road, East Ham.
Mrs. E. Ryan, 21 Abbotts Road, East Ham.
Mrs. Ayers, 86 Birkbeck Road, Leytonstone.
A. W. Chapman, 132 Effra Road, Wimbledon.
Miss M. Edmondson, 75 Waterloo Road, Burnley.
W. J. Baxter, 38 Douglas Street, Cork, Ireland.
A. Beech, 123 Victoria Road, Dundee.

Solutions:

1. O rinoco
   R ichmond
   I sabella
   O ven
   L ady Jane Grey
   E lizabeth

2. "Christmas with your clan;
   Easter—where you can!"
   Italy. Christmas. Mistletoe. Snow. Easter. Yule. Cheer Churl. Win. A.

3.
C	I	R	C	E
I	D	I	O	M
R	I	F	L	E
C	O	L	O	N
E	M	E	N	D

4. Scott. Byron. Watts. Shakespeare. Longfellow. Gray. Cowper

5. Burden.

6. Marabou—t
   Coco— a
   Ewe— r
   Fir— e

THE LOVERS OF YVONNE

By RAFAEL SABATINI.

SUMMARY.

ANDREA DE MANCINI, a nephew of Cardinal Mazarin, is found one day by the latter in the Palais Royal, Paris, in a state of intoxication. Gaston de Luynes, the narrator of this story, and fencing-master to de Mancini, is blamed by the Cardinal for allowing his nephew to get into such a condition, and is removed from his position of fencing-master.

Eugène de Canaples insults de Mancini and a duel is arranged, but the Cardinal hears of it and tells de Luynes that it must not take place. De Luynes realises that if he does not prevent it the Cardinal has power to do him great harm, and accordingly raises a quarrel with de Canaples which ends in a fight, de Canaples being severely wounded. The onlookers are enraged with de Luynes because he indiscreetly lets fall the fact that he raised this quarrel so as to prevent a duel between de Mancini and de Canaples, and he has to flee for his life. To escape his pursuers he springs on the step of a passing carriage, and the ladies inside let him shelter there for a time, but when he says that he has wounded de Canaples they order him to alight.

De Luynes then accompanies de Mancini to the home of Eugène de Canaples, whose sister, Yvonne, Cardinal Mazarin wishes de Mancini to marry. The Chevalier de Canaples receives de Luynes and de Mancini very cordially at his château. Yvonne, however, is not at all gracious to de Luynes, because she knows of the duel which he fought with her brother, as she and her sister Geneviève were the two ladies who befriended him. De Mancini falls in love with Geneviève.

De Luynes does not stay at the Château de Canaples, but at an inn in Blois, the *Lys de France*. One morning he is visited there by the Marquis de St. Auban, who himself wants to marry Yvonne—for her money. After insulting each other a duel is arranged for the following morning, but the time is afterwards altered to the evening of the day of the insult. St. Auban tells de Luynes that Cardinal Mazarin has issued a warrant for his arrest.

As de Luynes is riding to Canaples after his encounter with St. Auban, he is met by Malpertuis, an officer who had been in the train of St. Auban, and by him he is told that a plot is on foot to kidnap Yvonne. De Luynes warns the lady, but she takes no heed and falls into the trap set for her. De Luynes starts out to her assistance.

CHAPTER XII.

The Rescue.

SOME precious moments did I waste standing with that green rag betwixt my fingers, and I grew sick and numb in body and in mind. She was gone—carried off by a man I had reason to believe she hated, and whom God send she might have no motive to hate more deeply hereafter.

The ugly thought swelled until it blotted out all others, and in its train there came a fury upon me that drove me to do by instinct that which earlier I should have done by reason. I climbed back into the saddle, and away across the meadow I went, journeying at an angle with the road, my horse's head turned in the direction of Blois. That road at last was gained, and on I thundered at a stretched gallop, praying that my hard-used beast might last until the town was reached.

Now, as I have already said, I am not a man who falls easily a prey to excitement. It may have beset me in the heat of battle, when the fearsome lust of blood and death makes every man a raving maniac, thrilled with mad joy at every stab he deals, and laughing with fierce passion at every blow he takes, though in the taking of it his course be run. But saving at such wild times, never until then could I recall having been so little master of myself. There was a fever in me; all hell was in my blood; and, stranger still, and hitherto unknown at any season, there was a sickly fear that mastered me, and drew out great beads of sweat upon my brow. Fear for myself I have never known, for at no time has life so pampered me that the thought of parting company with it concerned me greatly. Fear for another I had not known till then, saving perchance the uneasiness at times that I had felt touching Andrea, because never yet had I sufficiently cared——

Thus far my thoughts took me, as I rode, and where I have halted did they halt, and stupidly I went over their ground again, like one who gropes for something in the dark.

Because never yet had I sufficiently cared. I had never cared——

And then, Ah, Heaven! As I turned the thought over I understood, and understanding, I pursued the sentence where I had left off.

But caring at last, I was sick with fear of what might befall the one I cared for. There lay the reason of the frenzied excitement whereof I was become the slave. That it was that had brought the moisture to my brow and curses to my lips; that it was that had caused me to instinctively thrust the rag of green velvet within my doublet.

Heavens! It was strange—aye, monstrous strange—and a right good jest for Fate to laugh at, that I, Gaston de Luynes, vile ruffler and worthless bravo, should have come to such a pass; I, whose forefinger had for the past ten years uptilted the chin of every tavern wench I had chanced upon; I, whose lips had never known the touch of other than the lips of these; I, who had thought my heart long dead to tenderness and devotion, or to any fondness save the animal one for my ignoble self. Yet there I rode as if the devil had me for a quarry, panting, swearing, reviling, and well-nigh sobbing with rage at a fear that I might come too late, all because of a proud lady who knew me for what I was, and held me in contempt because of her knowledge, all for a lady who had not the kindness for me that one might spare a dog, who looked on me as something not good to see.

Since there was no one to whom I might tell my story that they might mock me, I mocked myself, with a laugh that startled passers-by, and which, coupled with the crazy pace at which I dashed into Blois, caused them, I doubt not, to think me mad. Nor were they wrong; for mad, indeed, I deemed myself.

That I trampled no one under foot in my furious progress through the streets is a miracle that passes my understanding.

In the courtyard of the *Lys de France* I drew rein at last, with a tug that brought my shuddering brute on to his

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haunches, and sent those who stood about, flying into the shelter of the doorways.

"Another horse," I shouted as I sprang to the ground. "Another horse at once."

Then, as I turned to inquire for Michelot, I espied him leaning stolidly against the gateway.

"How long have you been there, Michelot?" I asked.

"Half-an-hour, mayhap."

"Saw you a closed carriage pass?"

"Ten minutes ago I saw one go by, followed by M. de St. Auban and a gentleman who greatly resembled M. de Vilmorin, besides an escort of four of the most villainous knaves——"

"That is the one," I broke in. "Quick, Michelot. Arm yourself and get your horse. I have need of you. Come knave, move yourself."

St. Auban bore down on me, but the glittering point of my rapier drove him back again.

At the end of a few minutes we set out at a sharp trot, leaving the curious ones, whom my loud-voiced commands had assembled, to speculate on the meaning of so much bustle. Once clear of the township we gave the reins to our horses, and our trot became a gallop as we travelled along the road to Meung, with the Loire on our right. And as we went I briefly told Michelot what was afoot, interlarding my explanations with prayers that we might come upon the kidnappers before they crossed the river, and curses at the flying pace of our mounts, which to my anxious mind seemed slow.

At about a mile from Blois the road runs over an undulation of the ground that is almost a hill. From the moment that I left Canables, as the Angelus was ringing, until the moment when our panting horses gained the brow of that little eminence, but half-an-hour had sped. Still, in that half-hour the tints had all but faded from the sky, and the twilight shadows grew thicker around us with every moment. Yet not so thick were they become but that I could see a coach at a standstill in the hollow, some three hundred yards beneath us, and, by that, half-a-dozen horses, of which four were riderless and held by the two men who were still mounted. Then, breathlessly scanning the field betwixt the road and the river, I espied five persons half-way across, and at a like distance from the water as we were from the coach. Two men, whom I supposed to be St. Auban and Vilmorin, were forcing along a woman, whose struggles, feeble though they appeared, yet retarded their progress in some measure. Behind them walked two others, musket on shoulder.

I pointed them out to Michelot with a soft cry of joy. We were in time.

Following with my eyes the course they appeared to be pursuing, I saw, by the bank, a boat, in which two men were waiting. Again I pointed, this time to the boat.

"Over the hedge, Michelot," I cried; "we must ride in a straight line for the water, and so intercept them. Follow me."

Over the hedge we went, and down the gentle slope at as round a pace as the soft ground would, with safety, allow. I had reckoned upon being opposed by six, or even eight men, whereas there were but four, one of whom I knew was hardly to be reckoned. Doubtless St. Auban had imagined himself safe from pursuit, when he left two of his bravos with the horses, probably to take them on to Meung, and there cross with them and rejoin him. Two more, I doubted not, were those seated at the oars.

I laughed to myself as I took in all this; but even as I laughed, those in the field stood still, and sent up a shout that told me we had been perceived.

"On, Michelot, on!" I shouted, spurring my horse forward. Then, in answer to their master's call, the two ruffians who had been doing duty as grooms, came pounding into the field.

"Ride to meet them, Michelot," I cried. Obediently he wheeled to the left, and I caught the swish of his sword as it left the scabbard.

St. Auban was now hurrying towards the river with his party. Already they were but fifty yards from the boat, and a hundred still lay 'twixt him and me. Furiously I pressed onward, and presently but half the distance separated us, whilst they were still some thirty yards from their goal.

Then his two bravos faced round to meet me, and one, standing some fifty paces in advance of the other, levelled his musket and fired. But, in his haste, he aimed too high; the bullet carried away my hat, and before the smoke had cleared, I was upon him. I had drawn a pistol from my holster, but it was not needed; my horse passed over him before he could save himself from my fearful charge.

In the fast fading light, a second musket barrel shone, and I saw the second ruffian taking aim at me, with not a dozen yards betwixt us. With the old soldier's instinct I wrenched at the reins till I brought my horse on to his haunches. It was high time; for simultaneously with my action, the fellow blazed at me, and the scream of pain that broke from my steed told me that the poor brute had taken the bullet. With a bound that carried me forward some six paces, the animal sank, quivering, to the ground. I disengaged my feet from the stirrups as he fell, but the shock of it sent me rolling on the ground, and the ruffian, seeing me fallen,

sprang forward, swinging his musket up above his head. I dodged the murderous, downward stroke, and as the stock buried itself close beside me, in the soft earth, I rose on one knee, and with a grim laugh, I raised my pistol. I brought the muzzle within a hand's breadth of his face, then fired, and shot him through the head. Perchance you'll say 'twas a murderous, cruel stroke. Mayhap it was; but at such seasons men stay not to unravel niceties, but strike, ere they themselves be stricken.

Leaping over the twitching body, I got out my sword and sprang after St. Auban, who, with Vilmorin and Yvonne—careless of what might betide his followers—was now within ten paces of the boat.

Pistol shots cracked behind me, and I wondered how Michelot was faring, but dared not pause to look.

The twain in the boat stood up, wielding their great oars, and methought them on the point of coming to their master's aid, in which case my battle had truly been a lost one. But that craven Vilmorin did me good service then, for with a cry of fear at my approach, he abandoned his hold of Yvonne, whose struggles were keeping both the men back; thus freed, he fled towards the boat, and jumping in, he shouted to the men in his shrill, quavering voice, to put off. Albeit they disobeyed him contemptuously and waited for the Marquis, still, they no longer left the boat, fearing, no doubt, that if they did so, the coward would put off alone.

As for St. Auban, Vilmorin's flight left him unequal to the task of dragging the girl along. She dug her heels into the ground, and tug as he might, for all that he set both hands to work, he could not move her. In this plight I came upon him, and challenged him to stand and face me.

With a bunch of oaths he got out his sword, but in doing so he was forced to remove one of his hands from the girl's arm. Seizing the opportunity with a ready wit and courage seldom found in women of her quality, she twisted herself from the grip of his left hand, and came staggering towards me for protection, holding up her pinioned wrists. With my blade I severed the cord, whereupon she plucked the gag from her mouth, and sank against my side, her struggles having left her weak indeed.

As I set my arm about her waist to support her, my heart seemed to swell within me, and strange melodies shaped themselves within my soul.

St. Auban bore down upon me with a fearful oath, but the glittering point of my rapier danced before his eyes, and drove him back again.

"To me, Vilmorin, you cowardly cur!" he shouted. "To me, you dogs!"

He let fly at them a volley of blood-curdling oaths, then, without waiting to see if they obeyed him, he came at me again, and our swords met.

"Courage, Mademoiselle," I whispered, as a sigh that was almost a groan escaped her. "Have no fear."

But that fight was not destined to be fought, for, as again we engaged, there came the fall of running feet behind me. It flashed across my mind that Michelot had been worsted, and that my back was about to be assailed. But in St. Auban's face I saw, as in a mirror, that he who came was Michelot.

"Steady there!" snarled the Marquis, springing back beyond my reach. "What can a man do with naught but fools and poltroons to serve him? Faugh! We will continue our swordplay at St. Sulpice des Reaux to-night. Au revoir, M. de Luynes."

Turning, he sheathed his sword, and running down to the river, bounded into the boat, where I heard him reviling Vilmorin with every foul name he could call to mind.

My blood was aflame, and I was not minded to wait for our meeting at Reaux. Consigning Mademoiselle to the care of Michelet, who stood panting and bleeding from a wound in his shoulder, I turned back to my dead horse, and plucking the remaining pistol from the holster, I ran down to the very edge of the water. The boat was not ten yards from shore, and my action had been unheeded by St Auban, who was standing in the stern.

Kneeling, I took careful aim at him, and as God lives, I would have saved much of the trouble that was to follow had I been allowed to fire. But at that moment a hand was laid upon my arm, and Yvonne's sweet voice murmured in my ear, "You have fought a brave and gallant fight, M. de Luynes, and you have done a deed of which the knights of old might have been proud. Do not mar it by an act of murder."

"Murder, Mademoiselle?" I gasped, letting my hand fall. "Surely there is no murder in this?"

"A suspicion of it, I think, and so brave a man should have clean hands."

CHAPTER XIII.
The Hand of Yvonne.

We did not long remain upon the field of battle. Indeed, if we lingered at all, it was but so that Mademoiselle might bandage Michelot's wound. And while he did so, my stout henchman related to us how it had fared with him; how having taken the two ruffians separately, he had been wounded by the first, whom he repaid by splitting his skull, whereupon the second one had discharged his pistol without effect, then made off towards the road, while Michelot, remembering that I might need assistance, had let him go.

"There, good Michelot," quoth Mademoiselle, completing her task, "I have done what little I can. And now, M. de Luynes, let us go."

It was close upon seven o'clock, and night was at hand. Already the moon was showing her large, full face above the tree tops by Chambord, and casting a silver streak athwart the stream. The plash of oars from the Marquis' boat was waxing indistinct, despite the stillness, whilst by the eye the boat itself was no longer to be distinguished.

As I turned, my glance fell upon the bravo whom I had shot. He lay stiff and stark upon his back, his sightless eyes wide open and staring heavenwards, his face all blood smeared and ghastly to behold.

Mademoiselle shuddered. "Let us go," she repeated, in a faint whisper. Her eye had also fallen upon that thing, and her voice was full of awe. She laid her hand upon my sleeve, and, 'neath the suasion of her touch I moved away.

To our surprise and joy we found St. Auban's coach where we had left it, with two saddled horses tethered close by. The others had doubtless been taken by the coachman and the bravo who had escaped Michelot, both of whom had fled. These animals we looked upon as the spoils of war, and, accordingly, when we set out in the coach—Mademoiselle having desired me to ride beside her therein, Michelot wielding the reins, it was with those two horses tethered behind.

"Monsieur de Luynes," said my companion softly, "I fear that I have done you a great injustice. Indeed I know not how to crave your forgiveness, how to thank you, or how to hide my shame at those words I spoke to you this afternoon at Canaples."

"Not another word on that score, Mademoiselle."

And to myself I thought of what recompense already had been mine. To me it had been given to have her lean trustingly upon me, my arm about her waist, whilst sword in hand I had fought for her. Heavens! Was that not something to have lived for—aye, and to have died for—methought.

"I deserved, Monsieur," she continued presently, "that you should have left me to my fate for all the odious things I uttered when you warned me of my peril, and for the manner in which I have treated you since your coming to Blois."

"You have but treated me, Mademoiselle, in the only manner in which you could treat one so far beneath you, one who is utterly unworthy that you should bestow a single regret upon him."

"You are strangely humble to-night, Monsieur. It is unwonted in you, and for once you wrong yourself. You have not said that I am forgiven."

"I have naught to forgive."

"Alas! you have—indeed you have."

"Well then!" quoth I, with a return of my old tone of banter, "I forgive."

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Thereafter we travelled on in silence for some little while, my heart full of joy at being so near to her, and the friendliness which she evinced for me; and my mind casting o'er my joyous heart a cloud of some indefinable evil presage.

"You are a brave man, M. de Luynes," she murmured presently, "and I have been taught that brave men are ever honourable and true."

"Had they who taught you that known Gaston de Luynes, they would have told you instead that it is possible for a vile man to have the one redeeming virtue of courage, even as it is possible for a liar to have a countenance that is sweet and innocent."

"There speaks that humble mood you are affecting, and which sits upon you as my father's clothes might do. Nay, Monsieur, I shall hold to my first teaching, and be deaf to yours."

Again there was a spell of silence. At last—

"I have been thinking, Monsieur," she said, "of that other occasion on which you rode with me. I remember that you said you had killed a man, and when I asked you why, you said that you had done it because he sought to kill *you*. Was that the truth?"

"Assuredly, Mademoiselle. We fought a duel, and it is customary in a duel for each to seek to kill the other."

"But why was this duel fought?" she cried, with some petulance.

"I fear me, Mademoiselle, that I may not answer you," I said, recalling the exact motives, and thinking of how futile appeared the quarrel which Eugène de Canaples had sought with Andrea, when viewed in the light of what had since befallen.

"Was the quarrel of your seeking?"

"In a measure it was, Mademoiselle."

"In a measure?" she echoed. Then persisting, as women will, "Will you not tell me what this measure was?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle," I answered in despair, "I will tell you just so much as I may. Your brother had occasion to be opposed to certain projects that were being formed in Paris by persons high in power around a beardless boy. Himself of too small importance to dare wage war against those powerful ones who would have crushed him, your brother sought to gain his ends by sending a challenge to this boy. The lad was high-spirited, and consented to meet M. de Canaples, by whom he would assuredly have been murdered—'tis the only word, Mademoiselle—had I not intervened as I did."

She was silent for a moment, then—

"It grieves me to disturb you, but I have a warrant for your arrest."

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"I believe you, Monsieur," she said simply. "You thought then to shield another—but why?"

"For three reasons, Mademoiselle. Firstly, those persons high in power chose to think it my fault that the quarrel had arisen, and threatened to hang me if the duel took place and the boy were harmed. Secondly, I myself felt a kindness for the boy. Thirdly, because whatever sins Heaven may record against me, it has at least ever been my way to side against men who, confident of their superiority, seek with the cowardly courage of the strong to harm the weak. It is, Mademoiselle, the courage of the man who knows no fear when he strikes a woman, yet who will shake with a palsy when another man but threatens him."

"Why did you not tell me all this before?" she whispered, after a pause, and methought I caught a quaver in her voice.

I laughed for answer, and she read my laugh aright; presently she pursued her questions, and asked me the name of the boy I had defended. But I evaded her, telling her that she must need no further details to believe me.

"It is not that, Monsieur. I *do* believe you; I do indeed, but——"

"Hark, Mademoiselle!" I cried suddenly, as the clatter of many hoofs sounded near at hand. "What is that?"

A shout rang out at that moment.

"Halt! Who goes there?"

"Oh, Heaven!" exclaimed Mademoiselle, and again the voice sounded, this time more sinister:

"Halt, I say—in the king's name!"

The coach came to a standstill, and through the window I beheld the shadowy forms of several mounted men and the feeble glare of a lantern.

"Who travels in the carriage, knave?" came the voice again.

"Mademoiselle de Canaples," answered Michelot; then like a fool he must needs add, "have a care whom you knave, my master, if you would grow old."

"Tut tut! Let us behold this Mademoiselle de Canaples who owns so fearful a warrior for a coachman."

The door was flung rudely open, and the man bearing the lantern, whose rays shone upon a uniform of the Cardinal's guards, confronted us.

With a chuckle he flashed the light in my face, then suddenly grew serious.

"Good Heavens! Is it indeed you, M. de Luynes?" quoth he, adding with stern politeness, "it grieves me to disturb you, but I have a warrant for your arrest."

He was fumbling in his doublet as he spoke, and during the time I had leisure to scan his countenance, recognising to my surprise a young lieutenant of the guards who had but recently served with me, and with whom I had been on terms almost of friendship. His words, "I have a warrant for your arrest," came like a bolt from the blue to enlighten me, and to remind me of what St. Auban had that morning told me, and which for the nonce I had all but forgotten.

Upon hearing those same words, Yvonne, methought, grew pale, and her eyes were bent upon me with a look of surprise and pity.

"Upon what charge am I arrested?" I inquired with forced composure.

"My warrant mentions none, M. de Luynes. It is here." And he thrust before me a paper, whose purport I could have read in its shape and seals. Idly my eyes ran along the words:

"By these presents I charge and empower my lieutenant, Jean de Montrésor, to seize where'er he may be found, hold, and conduct to Paris the sieur Gaston de Luynes——"

And so further, until the Cardinal's signature ended the legal verbiage.

"In the king's name, M. de Luynes," said Montrésor, firmly yet deferentially, "your sword."

It would have been madness to have done aught but comply with this request, and so I surrendered my rapier, which he in his turn delivered to one of his followers. Next I stepped down from the coach, and turned to take leave of Mademoiselle, whereupon Montrésor, thinking that peradventure matters were as they appeared to be between us, and being a man of fine feelings, signed to his men to fall back, whilst he, himself, withdrew a few paces.

"Farewell, Mademoiselle," I said simply. "I shall carry with me for consolation the memory that I have been of service to you, and I shall ever—during the little time that may be left me—be grateful to Heaven for the opportunity that it has afforded me of causing you—perchance without sufficient reason—to think better of me. Farewell, Mademoiselle. Heaven guard you!"

It was too dark to see her face, but my heart bounded with joy to catch in her voice a quiver that argued, methought, regret for me.

"What does it mean, M. de Luynes? Why are they taking you?"

"Because I have displeased my Lord Cardinal, albeit, Mademoiselle, I swear to you that I have no cause for shame at the reasons for which I am being arrested."

"My father is Monseigneur de Mazarin's friend," she cried. "He is also yours. He shall exert for you that influence he possesses."

"'Twere useless, Mademoiselle. Besides, what does it signify? Again, farewell."

She spoke no answering word, but silently held out her hand. Silently I took it in mine, and for a moment I hesitated, thinking of what I was—of what she was. At last, moved by some power that was greater than my will, I stooped and pressed those shapely fingers to my lips. Then I stepped suddenly back and closed the carriage door, oppressed by a feeling akin to that of having done an evil deed.

"Have I your permission to say a word to my servant, M. le Lieutenant?" I inquired.

He bowed assent, whereat, stepping close up to the horror-stricken Michelot—

"Drive straight to the Château de Canaples," I said, in a low voice. "Thereafter return to the *Lys de France*, and there wait until you hear from me. Here, take my purse; there are some fifty pistoles in it."

"Speak but the word, Monsieur," he growled, "and I'll pistol a couple of these dogs."

"Pah! You grow childish," I laughed, "or can you not see that fellow's musket?"

"Oh! I'll risk his aim. I never yet knew one of those curs to shoot straight."

"No, no, obey me, Michelot. Think of Mademoiselle. Go! Farewell! If we should not meet again, my friend," I finished, as I seized his loyal hand, "what few things of mine are at the hostelry shall belong to you, as well as what may be left of this money. It is little enough payment, Michelot, for all your faithfulness——"

"Monsieur, Monsieur!" he cried.

"How now!" I muttered, "we are becoming women. Be off, you knave. Farewell."

The peremptoriness of my tone ended our leave-taking, and caused him to grip his reins and bring down his whip. The coach moved on. A white face, on which the moonlight fell, glanced at me from the window, then to my staring eyes naught was left but the back of the retreating vehicle, with one of the two saddle-horses that had been tethered to it still ambling in its wake.

"M. de Montrésor," I said, thrusting my bullet-pierced hat upon my head, "I am at your service."

(To be continued.)

EMMA: "No, George, it cannot be. We must part." (Bitterly.) "My purse-proud father will not accept a poor man for his son-in-law." George (frantically): "Say not so. I cannot give thee up. My heart will break. I——" Purse-proud father enters the room without observing them. Throws himself into a chair and groans aloud: "Bankruptcy! Ruin! Every penny swept away!" George (sweeping himself away at these words): "Farewell, then, Emma, since you discard me." But he says to himself, "Mighty narrow escape that."

A Heart's Awakening.

"I DESIRE an explanation!" The man's voice was almost rough in its tone of command. "I wish to understand the situation exactly."

Enid Carew drew herself up haughtily.

"Indeed," she said, though, try how she would, she could not keep the trace of nervousness from her voice, "Indeed, and suppose I refuse, what then?"

She threw down her riding-whip on the table and sank into the nearest chair.

He stood, a giant of strength and anger, looking down at her.

"What then? I tell you," he began fiercely, then, suddenly changing his tone, said quietly, "I am waiting for the explanation of your conduct."

The girl looked up at him defiantly.

"As for that," and she shrugged her shoulders, "That is my own affair."

He stood with folded arms, looking sternly at her.

Enid shifted her position uneasily.

"For goodness' sake sit down, that tragic air is overdone. I wish I had not told you; but as I have, why not show a bold front, instead of——"

She did not finish her sentence, for a glance at his white set face, and eyes glittering with anger, made her falter. He came close to her, and stooping, took hold of her wrists,

"Enid, you shall rue this day, that I swear. To hink that all this time you have let me be your constant companion, let me—yes," he said fiercely, "let me make love to you, and all the while you had not the smallest intention of returning that love."

"Well, but my dear Jack, surely you could see it was merely a mild flirtation on my part. I am sure I quite understood your conduct to be but that."

"A mild flirtation! Only that!" he took up his hat. "If that is going to be your behaviour, I don't envy your future husband."

Enid sprang up, her face quivering.

"How dare you! How dare you!" she cried breathlessly.

"It is your own fault," he flung out recklessly; "You have destroyed my happiness, and my faith in woman."

She laughed scornfully. "That is quite the correct ending, the faith in woman is always the first to go."

He did not heed her. "I will be revenged; you were only playing with me, you say, you took all the love I had to give you, and have thrown it back into my face. Love, when so treated, turns to hate; for the hatred I now bear you I will treat all women as you have treated me. In the end," he said grimly, "it is the woman who suffers."

Without a word she turned and rang the bell.

He reached the door in long strides and gave one last long look back at her.

She was standing erect, her fair face flushed, her blue eyes flaming with anger.

Her wonderful beauty maddened him.

"You heartless flirt," he hissed, and was gone.

Enid threw herself in a chair, smarting under his words; she felt an unwonted tug at her heartstrings. What a pity money was so essential to her happiness! If it had not been for the money, perhaps——. But she checked the thought. She started, a little hand was resting on her shoulder.

"Dulcie!" she said sharply. "What are you doing here?"

"Sister Enid, do not be angry," said the child timidly, "I could not help being here. I was behind the screen reading my fairy tales and I could not help hearing. Oh, sister Enid," she cried piteously, "you are not a heartless flirt. Why did he call you that?"

Enid looked at the baby face, with its wondering eyes, lifted to hers with such adoring love. She hesitated as to how she should answer.

This child was the one being in the world who could touch her heart.

"It was only fun, Dulcie; he was only pretending," she said lamely.

The child's face flushed, and she lifted her head proudly.

"No, it was not pretence," she said firmly, "I know pretence; it was real. Why don't you tell me why he was so angry, and why he called you such horrid names?" still presisted the child.

"Because," broke out Enid, "he loves me."

Then, seeing the perplexity in the baby eyes, she said, "Darling, you can't understand such things just yet. Don't bother about them. Go and finish your fairy tales."

But Dulcie shook her head.

"I must bother. You are not a heartless flirt."

The persistence of the child began to weary Enid, and she said laughingly, "I tell you, darling, Enid likes to be called a flirt. Think of the dances, the lovely dresses, and all the gentlemen who are so fond of Enid, and who give her presents. All the glory, all the sparkle would not be there if Enid were not a heartless flirt." She spoke recklessly, her thoughts were of Jack Graham. She clapped her hands, "Dulcie! Dulcie!" she cried excitedly, "it is such fun to be a flirt."

For an instant Dulcie looked at her gravely, then she caught her sister's mood.

"How lovely you are," she cried, "Sister Enid, let me be like you; may I be a flirt?"

Enid started. How pretty, how fair the child was! How radiant the innocent eyes looked, shining with glee as she put the question, "Sister Enid, may I be a flirt?"

A wave of shame passed over Enid. To be a flirt did not seem to be such a thing to boast of after all. There must be better, fairer things for this little child.

She stooped and kissed the golden curls, so like her own.

"No, darling," she answered, with unwonted gentleness, "You had better be a good fairy princess."

"But shall I have the fun? Shall I be as happy as you?"

Enid stroked the child's head, then she said slowly, "Yes, my Dulcie, you will perhaps be happier," then, kissing the child, she suddenly changed her tone, "I am going to be very busy, dear, so run away now."

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Enid did not appear to be very busy, she still remained where she was, buried deep in thought.

That morning she had been her usual ride with Jack Graham. During that ride he had again spoken to her of love; this time she had not led him on to tell of his passion for her, but had told him that her engagement with Lord Dunlop would soon be publicly announced. She knew this was not at present true; Lord Dunlop had not actually proposed to her, but had acted in such a way that she expected him to do so at any moment. It had been her ambition for some time to become Lady Dunlop, and she was one to sacrifice all to her ambition. She was nineteen, and enjoying to the full her brilliant beauty. She loved that beauty far too well to think of throwing it away on a poor man like Jack Graham. She was interrupted in her meditations, a letter was brought to her; she opened it eagerly.

"At last the time has come! My lord is rather wanting in courage to propose by letter! However, it will save a good deal of unnecessary exertion on my part to scribble off a few lines of acceptance."

As she read the letter her face underwent a change, her colour slowly ebbed away, her fingers trembled visibly. With an angry cry she threw down the letter and paced the room.

"It can't be! It shall not be so!" she muttered. But it was so. The letter mocked at her, as the very witness that it was so.

She picked it up, holding it as though it would scorch her fingers, and read it again.

"Dear Enid," it ran, "I have hastily left for town, and perhaps you will be surprised when I tell you that Lady Kitty is my reason for having done so. She has promised to be my wife; I want you to be the first to congratulate me. She wished that you should be the very first to know. I shall never forget the fine time you and I have had together.—Yours ever,

RALPH."

Enid tore the letter into shreds; she shed tears; hot and fast they ran down her cheeks, tears of anger and mortification.

"Lady Kitty!" she ejaculated, "That designing little wretch! I really thought him safe in my hands. So she made him write at once and tell me! The insult! Her delight!" She stamped her foot, "she shall not triumph over me. She shall be informed of my news."

She got together pen and paper, and, with feverish haste, wrote:—

"Dear Ralph,—A thousand congratulations. I always knew Lady Kitty to be the one woman in the world for you. I was just writing to tell you of my news when your letter arrived. Congratulate *me*, for I, too, am to be married, to Colonel Dewey. We have known one another a long, long time, and I consider myself a happy, lucky, girl. He is a man worth loving. —Yours ever,

ENID CAREW."

She then wrote a note to Colonel Dewey, consenting to see him that afternoon. He had written to her pleading for an interview, and stating his reason for coming. He loved her, and wished to ask her to be his wife. She had meant to refuse to see him, but now she altered her mind. Granting this interview meant accepting his love.

The sun was gradually sinking to rest when Colonel Dewey arrived. He was a tall, fine man, without a good feature in his face except his eyes, though Enid had always declared there was no life in them. They were serious eyes of a deep grey. People looked into those eyes and respected and trusted him.

"You heartless flirt," he hissed, and was gone.

Just now, as he came eagerly forward, there was a great light in those eyes; Enid no longer denied their lack of life, but now the discovery irritated her. He had a humble, happy look, and she detested a humble man. Most of her lovers had been wild and impetuous.

Many voted Colonel Dewey a "bore"; he had a slow, drawling style of speaking, and a quiet, very slow way of doing things; but he had two great advantages, riches, and an even temper.

As Enid went to meet him, a shiver ran through her. Why had it to be this man?

"Enid!" he said, "Do you know what this means to me?"

"Yes," she answered, with a soft smile, "At least, I know what it means to me."

"Enid!" he exclaimed, "Dear, if you could but see

the depth of my regard for you! If you could but know the firm resolve with which I have dedicated my future life to your happiness and welfare; if, my dear love, you could but understand the intense gratitude I feel for such unspeakable joy!"

He put his arm around her.

"Enid! Turn your face towards me, that I may see your dear eyes of love. Oh, Enid, make me worthy of this."

Enid slowly raised her eyes and looked at him.

A deep, pure love shone in his eyes, a great gladness was written on his face; from such love and joy she hid her face.

She suddenly felt ashamed.

He pressed her closer to him.

"Sweetheart, I love you with my whole soul. Tell me that you love me."

Enid was silent, she felt the words would choke her; she freed herself from his embrace, and said, in a low voice, "Philip, I am glad I am to be your wife."

She stood looking out of the window. Slowly, very slowly the sun was sinking; in a few moments it would be gone, taking with it all brightness and warmth.

She felt a strange impulse to call out to it to stay yet a little while longer; a thousand thoughts flitted through her brain.

Her first thought had been, "I cannot marry him, he is too good, and I cannot wrong him so." Then, quick as lightning, came the thought of Lady Kitty's triumph; Jack Graham's words rose clearly before her. Her vanity was sorely hurt. Her face was pale, and in the fast fading daylight it looked wistful.

"I am glad I am to be your wife," she repeated, turning to him.

With a glad cry he took her again in his arms.

This silent, slow man, seemed transformed.

The intensity and depth of his passion made her tremble.

She longed, with a feverish longing, for the interview to end. She felt helpless before him, and unlike her usual self; and this feeling made her angry with herself and him.

When at last he left her, she flung herself into a chair and buried her face in her hands.

"What have I done? But I could not help it. As I cannot marry Lord Dunlop nor—nor Jack, it may as well be Philip as any other man. I could not wait, both Lady Kitty and Jack must hear of my engagement at once. Philip will always let me have my own way and that is the great thing."

It is nearly two years since the day Enid consented to be Colonel Dewey's wife.

Those two years had not passed well with her; her life, wedded to the man she had never loved, seemed hateful to her. She had deeply repented her rash act, but regret did not soften her towards the man she had so cruelly wronged; it gave her a cold dislike towards him, and everything he did irritated and bored her beyond bounds.

Philip still loved his beautiful young wife, but his love was patient and quiet, reposing infinite trust in her; he could not understand her restless character, judged by his own, restful, slow one.

To escape from the dumb pleading of her husband's love, to escape from those trusting eyes, she often left him for weeks together to visit friends.

He never accompanied her. She had once given a hint that she did not want him; he accepted the hint and stayed at home. People said it was this quiet acceptance of facts that was so bad for his wife. Perhaps such was the case. Perhaps he should have gone with her or bidden her stay at home. But he did neither; with a loving, quiet smile, he bade her go and enjoy herself.

How she did enjoy herself, she took care he should not know.

One sunny afternoon Enid was pacing the beautiful lawns of "The Hall," with her little six months' old baby in her arms.

The child had been ill, and had but recently left death's door. During that time the mother's heart had stirred to new emotions. A great passion awoke within her.

For the first time since her childhood she had fallen on her knees. She prayed God to spare the little life. She saw in her child a means whereby she might rise to better things. She felt that through her child she might fling off her old, wild, restless life, and be led by baby hands through happy peaceful paths.

God heard her prayer and the child lived. From that day she seemed a softened being, gentle and tender even towards her husband. As she now paced the garden she sang a soft lullaby until the little one fell into a sweet sleep; then, with a happy sigh, she settled herself in an easy chair, holding her baby tenderly to her.

She looked at the sweet face which death had so nearly snatched from her, and a wave of love swept over her.

"My baby!" she murmured. "I never thought I had such love in me. My little Dulcie, be mother's guardian angel; with these tiny hands keep mother back from her thoughtless ways."

Then, with a sob, she strained the child passionately to her.

"Oh, my baby! if you could see your mother as she really is, my baby, how you would despise her! Baby! that shall not be. Mother will live so that her child shall see, and not suffer. Baby! I will walk with you through life afresh."

Colonel Dewey came towards them. She turned to him, and held out her hand. There shone a light within her eyes he had but lately seen there.

"Come and look at baby," she said.

Something in her softened voice, in her eyes, made him exclaim, "My darling, tell me you love me?"

The words broke from him ere he knew he had said them.

Enid looked at him and saw the same deep love that was there on their wedding day, and, for the first time since then, she longed to answer him as he wished.

And why not? Surely she was beginning to love this tender, true husband! She looked at her baby, was he not the father of her child? Yes, she was sure, at last, the love for him was growing.

She unconsciously pressed the child closer to her, she felt so happy.

Then she said in a low voice, with eyes bent upon the little sleeping face, "Philip, you know I love you."

"And, Enid, are you happy, dear?"

"Yes, so happy," she pressed her cheek to that of her baby; then she added almost passionately; "Philip, help me to be a better woman. Never take your love from me. If we are ever in sorrow, let our love for one another compensate for all."

Never had she felt such joy of living as now, with the sweet sunshine around her, and her baby in her arms.

Then came a fearful day; early one morning their child was suddenly taken from them. All that day

Enid lay in a stupor, holding the child in her arms and caressing its cheek. When at last it dawned upon her that this cold, stiff form was her little daughter, she recoiled from it, uttering low moans of anguish and despair.

When she left her child, her husband came to meet her. His words of love and comfort were checked as he gazed upon her face. Her eyes shone with a strange, cold light, her lips were tightly drawn in one hard line.

He put his hand upon her shoulder, he tried to soften those cruelly cold eyes.

"Enid, let me try and comfort you. Remember your own words, 'If we are ever in sorrow let our love compensate for all.'"

She broke into a harsh, bitter laugh.

"Then, I did not know what sorrow was," she said.

"But, dear, you knew what love was," and his voice was melting with tenderness. "You know that it can heal all."

She answered coldly, "I lied to you. It was not love for you I felt, but love for my child, who now lies dead. God has been cruel and merciless. Why did He let me taste such happiness only to take it from me? He showed no pity, and I will show neither mercy nor pity to any one."

Her husband put his arms around her, the tears were in his eyes.

"My wife," he said huskily, "you are wild with pain and do not know what you say. Hush, Enid, for my sake."

She broke from him.

"I will have no pity, no love, since the only thing that made my life happy is denied me. Go from me," she cried, "I wish to be alone."

Her words struck deeply through his heart, and left it slowly bleeding. With eyes full of pain, he turned and left her.

For months Enid remained in a wild state of grief, shutting herself away from her husband, leading a solitary, miserable life.

The months grew into years; another child was given to her, this time a son.

No sign of love shone in her eyes when they brought her baby to her. She turned from it hastily. "Take it away," she cried, "Lest I learn to love it, and then it will die. I will never love again."

And so the baby grew into a little grave-eyed child, hungering for his mother's love. As time passed slowly by, Enid felt a vague uneasiness filling her heart. Her husband's love for her seemed to have died, and a stolid, cold indifference reigned in its stead.

Her son, Roy, had her little daughter's eyes, and, from them, always seemed to shine, for her, a dumb, pathetic pleading that stirred her heart with strange emotions. A vague unrest entered that heart which, at her baby's death, had turned to stone. Now she felt an undefined craving for she knew not what.

When love would have entered once more into her life she thrust it, trembling, from her. But sometimes she felt a longing to hold her boy in her arms, and satisfy his hungering gaze.

One night she dreamt a dream. Her boy was calling her with outstretched arms; she hastened to him, and folded him in a passionate embrace, all the pent-up love rushing out in mighty strength. She put him from her in order to gaze upon the little face, when her blood ran cold within her. The child was dead; she had crushed the life from out him, in that one long embrace.

She awoke with a cry on her lips, and a great fear at her heart.

During the remainder of that night she lay awake, her brain on fire with many thoughts. She found herself repeating words until their meaning had ceased to strike her.

"My boy, I must not love you, it will be your death. I cannot, dare not, love you," she said to herself over and over again. When the dawn began to break she had come to a firm resolve to go away and drown her uneasiness of heart in social pleasure.

"I am getting morbid," she reasoned with herself, "I am getting even careless of my beauty."

That morning, as she was arranging the flowers in the breakfast-room, she said to her husband:

"Philip! I think I will go and pay a visit to the Chasemore's."

Philip continued to read his morning paper; he did not answer her.

She turned slightly to him. "Philip, did you hear?"

"You are going to the Chasemore's," he said in a tone of indifference.

She knew his disapproval of her friends, and had expected him to protest against her going. She felt a longing to bring a little life into his voice, even if it should be anger.

"Philip," she said slowly, and with emphasis, "I always have great fun at the Chasemore's." She looked at him significantly, but he was not looking at her.

She turned away, hurt and vexed; angry words sprang to her lips, but she checked them. She was holding in her hand a little china dog she had once given to her baby girl. It recalled those happy days. She suddenly wished her husband would ask her not to go; the "fun" at the Chasemore's seemed to fade away.

"Philip," she said, and there were tears in her eyes. "Shall I go, or would you rather that I stayed?"

Philip did not see those tears, he rose, and stood looking out of the window.

His pride was struggling with his love. She herself had proposed to stay and he longed to ask her to remain. Yet how often had she been on the point of yielding to some wish of his, only to suddenly turn coldly from him? How often had his words of love been withered upon his lips? Pride forbade him to trust again to her waywardness. He stifled his desire to go to her and bid her stay; and his voice rang out cold, and seemingly indifferent:

"Go by all means, it is best that you should sometimes have a little fun." And so she went.

On the evening of Enid's arrival at Chasemore Hall, a ball was given. She had nearly danced the evening through when, feeling strangely tired, she escaped from the hot crowded rooms into the fresh night air. As she was strolling in the garden she saw, coming towards her, the figure of a man; as he came nearer she felt a strange quickening of her heart, the figure seemed familiar. It was Jack Graham.

He came to her with outstretched hand, a glad smile upon his lips. She saw the look in his eyes and turned away. She did not hear him murmur to himself, "Now is the time of my revenge." She only heard him call her name in a low voice, "Enid!" Then, he continued abruptly, "I have just discovered that Lady Dunlop is not you. Is it true that you are Dewey's wife?"

"I am Colonel Dewey's wife," she answered. "I discovered, just in time, that I did not care enough for Lord Dunlop to be his wife."

Jack Graham had only returned from South Africa a few months; during that period he had lost no time in discovering what had become of Enid. Having heard she was, at the present time, at the Chasemore's, he determined to follow her thither, not from any feeling of love—that had left him long ago—but from a keen desire to punish her for her treatment of him years ago.

After that evening, Jack Graham and Mrs. Dewey were to be seen always together. Some said it was scandalous, but these were only recent friends of the Chasemore's, and they were told, "It is nothing; it is merely Mrs. Dewey's way."

Weeks had slipped into months, and each day had been spent in Jack's company, until her heart was filled with feverish unrest. One day the crisis came, he had pleaded with such earnestness that it seemed as though she were to be carried away.

"Come," he concluded, "trust yourself to me for ever, and you will never regret it."

His eyes were turned from hers, and she did not see their evil look, nor hear his muttered whisper, "In the end the woman suffers. This is my revenge."

Unconsciously she put her hand to her heart; her breath came in gasps.

"Let me think one moment. Give me time, give me time."

Suddenly a footstep was heard approaching.

Jack started to his feet.

A telegram was brought to Enid; she opened it and read: "Do not return home; Roy has scarlet fever."

She stood staring at the piece of paper. Jack strode to her side and read the news.

He took her hand in his, "Fortune favours us," he said abruptly. "Now—"

But she interrupted him with a fierce gesture; she put her hand to her forehead and sank into a chair.

So it was to be the same thing with this other child. She had dreaded to let herself love her boy for fear that he might be taken away from her, and yet, perhaps, after all, he was going to die.

Now, against all reasoning, she felt a mighty longing to give her boy her love, reckless of all consequences. Now her one thought was that he was needing her.

"Go, leave me!" she cried huskily.

"Enid! You do not mean to let this make any difference! You know you do not care for the child."

She rose and drew herself to her full height.

"You do not know me," she said. "Neither did I know myself. Oh, baby! I have tried to starve myself from your love, and now my heart is crying out against it. Oh, baby! What have you not saved me from? Jack, I will go to my boy, and, oh! if you have any pity, forget what has happened between us, forget what we have said to-day."

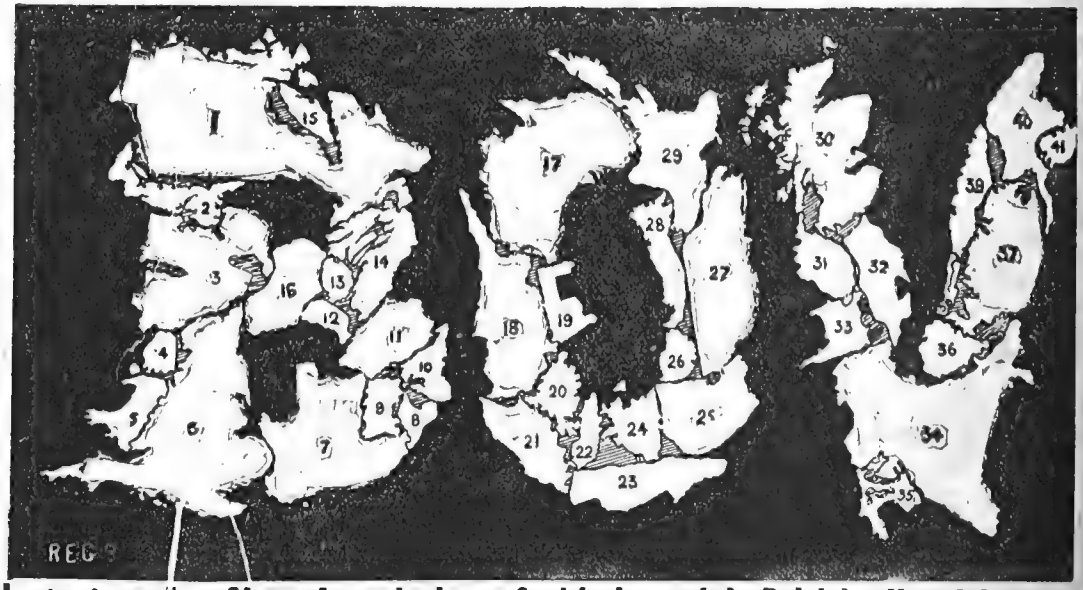
"How can I forget?" he said angrily. "Forget, indeed, when you have let me—"

She interrupted him hastily; "Oh, I know, I know; but I am not wholly bad, though, to others, it must seem so. You do not really love me, it is but a mad fancy, and again, I intreat you to forget. I was in a wild dream; I was unhappy, and I wished to drown my thoughts in excitement. Jack! remember I am a mother—and forget me."

"You should have thought of that before," he said coldly.

He was angry, but looking at her face, he could see how remorse had already laid its terrible finger upon

How the BRITISH



And Illustrates the Close Association of this Imperial British Nourishment with the whole of King Edward's Dominions at Home and Beyond the Seas.

her. He saw the pleading in her eyes, and he felt pity for her suffering.

"Enid," he said slowly, "I will forget."

* * * * *

"Why did you come?" said Colonel Dewey. "You can do no good, and will only run the risk yourself."

Enid turned on him fiercely.

"Why did you not send for me? How dared you keep me from my child?"

"You said you disliked him," answered her husband slowly, "and I thought you would never forgive me if I brought you in the midst of scarlet fever."

She looked at him in silence, and something in her gaze made him take a step nearer to her. He put his hand upon her shoulder.

"Enid, do you really care so much, dear?"

There was a pleading in his eyes; a note of his old love for her had crept back unawares into his voice, the sight of her suffering had called it there. The tears were running down her face.

"Philip! We cannot lose this one, too. My heart has never healed from that great blow, and God cannot be so cruel as to take my boy from me; he is all we have; he must not die. Oh, Philip! I have been hungering for this love, but I feared to love him. My heart was bitter, and I thought to drown my unhappiness in excitement, so I went away. Yet if I had known he really wanted me, I would have stayed. Philip, take me to him."

When she saw the tiny wasted face of her child her heart contracted painfully. She met his brilliant restless eyes and knelt down beside him.

"Mother has come," she said softly. "Mother is here."

She put her hand upon the burning forehead. At her touch the fever-stricken eyes remained still, a smile played round the little mouth. Only for one instant, then, once more the little body was tossing to and fro in restless movements. Enid tried to soothe him, tried once again to recall that smile, but he did not heed her. He was separated from her by the awful gulf of unconsciousness. She turned blindly to her husband.

"Philip," she said piteously, her voice breaking with tears, "help me to bear it."

He went to her and put his arms around her, and, in silence, they watched the struggles of their child.

Together, thus, they looked for the critical moment when the fever would leave its victim.

The child recovered, and was given back to the mother's aching heart.

Night and day Enid watched over her boy with humble, joyous gratitude. Her soul was filled to overflowing, with a great, solemn peace.

Not only was her child restored to her, but, now best of all to her, durng those long, long, weary days and weeks of watching she had learnt to love her husband; learnt to give him what she once thought she could never give. Her heart was full of deep, full happiness.

Philip's love for her had never died, it now met hers in a great flood of tenderness.

"Enid! Say 'I love you, Philip!' and, this time, look deep into my eyes."

She lifted her face to his, and, with eyes full of love and reverence, put her arms around his neck, saying: "My Philip! I love you so; I love you so!"

W. Henderson.

EMPIRE spells BOVRIL

Note.

The shapes are correct, but the sizes are not in proportion.

Each number indicates a separate part of the Empire.

How many parts can you name?

The Lovers' Leap.

WHITE ELK the son of Standing Bear, the Shoshone chieftian, sat stolidly in the grim circle of Indians that sat round the council fire. He sat unmoved as each Indian in turn thrust his hand forward with the fingers outspread and the thumb pointing downward.

The last Indian in the circle had made the sign. Standing Bear rose and stood stiff and stern in the red light of the burning embers. Every eye was upon him. White Elk sat looking stolidly at him through half-closed eyelids. Standing Bear thrust his arm out at full length and slowly spread his fingers apart and turned his thumb towards the earth. A scream came from a group of women standing near the chief's lodge. Then two old squaws led away a young Indian woman who still sobbed in spite of the storied stoicism of her race.

The sentence of death had been passed on White Elk. He slowly rose as his father turned towards him and extended a piece of black wampum. He took it and tucked it in his girdle, bowed slowly to the council, and strode away to his own tepee, where he sat calmly puffing at his pipe long after the council had broken up and its members had gone quietly to their lodges.

White Elk sat alone in the silence of the night listening to the rushing waters of the Popoagie. It was the voice of his executioner. Three days more and he was to be cast from a high rock into the "Place of Punishment," the deep hole in the mountains, which swallowed up the rushing Popoagie, and carried it somewhere deep down into the bowels of the earth. Into this place White Elk was to be thrown because the Shoshones believed that the person who disappeared into the depths along with the roaring waters of the Popoagie, died a death more dreadful than any other that could be meted out to him. Because the Popoagie drew its victims so deeply down into the dark regions under the earth that the soul could never escape and find its way to the happy hunting ground of the tribe.

White Elk was not afraid to die. He had met death face to face a dozen times, and had not trembled. He had fought with the Blackfeet and the Sioux, and led his warriors to victory on many a hard fought field. He had fought hand to hand with the murderous Apaches, and never knew what it was to be afraid. But in spite of his seeming indifference, he shivered as he heard the fierce roar of the Popoagie tumbling riotously over the rocks and leaping down the precipice to disappear in the dark depths below.

He pictured his soul fighting with the angry water to regain the upper air, that it might ascend to the happy hunting ground in the clouds. But he knew the Popoagie would triumph. He was certain that no soul could defeat the malevolent spirit of the Popoagie.

White Elk could regard death with equanimity, but he could not bear the thought of an eternity spent battling with the spirit of the waters while Laughing Eyes waited for him in vain in the happy hunting ground. White Elk's head dropped forward and he groaned. He heard a sound behind him and sprang to his feet. Laughing Eyes stood beside him in the moonlight. She motioned him with her hand and he followed her out to the cliff overlooking the deep crevice, down which the Popoagie lost itself. On the cliff the two sat in the moonlight.

"You must not give yourself to the spirit of the Popoagie," said the girl. "You can go away. I will go with you. The Blackfeet have been your enemies but they love you, for you are a mighty warrior. To them you can go and they will make you a chief, and I will go with you."

White Elk sat silent. Then he spoke: "I must die, because I did not put to death Nazalla, the Blackfeet chief. I had my spear at his throat. I might have killed him. But years ago Nazalla spared my life when as a boy I was hunting alone in the forest. He gave me food and water and showed me the way back to my own people. I could not kill him as he lay wounded. But the Shoshones fear Nazalla. They think that with him dead the Blackfeet would never more triumph in battle. It is true. But I could not kill him. I would rather die and disappear into the under darkness forever."

The girl fell on her knees and intreated him. White Elk softly stroked her hair. But he only shook his head in reply to her intreaties. Long the two sat there. Then they arose and walked back to the village, and White Elk left Laughing Eyes at the door of her father's lodge.

Three days passed away, and the next morning just before sunrise all the Shoshones were gathered in view

of the great rock that lifted itself above the deep sink hole of the Popoagie. The medicine men of the tribe swaying their bodies chanted a death hymn.

As the first rays of the sun shone down the valley and rested redly upon the little group on the rock, White Elk stepped forward with a strong young Indian on either side. He turned and looked keenly back at the group of women who stood about Laughing Eyes. He gave a sign and the two young Indians rested their hands on his shoulder. White Elk stood with his face lifted up for a moment to the clouds.

He cast his eyes around and took a last look at the woods and at his people standing grim and silent in the clefts of the rocks. Then he sprang forward and shot straight downward from the top of the cliff. His body turned half over in the air. Then it struck with a splash in the roaring water and was drawn downward and disappeared forever in the cavernous depths of the "place of punishment."

The Indians stood looking downwards where the form of the young chief had disappeared. Then there was a cry and all looked again towards the top of the rock just as they saw Laughing Eyes hurl herself headlong downward towards the rushing water. She sank from sight, and her body, too, was drawn downward to the depths. White Elk's soul would not have to escape the spirit of Popoagie to meet that of Laughing Eyes.

D. F. P.

Photo Competition.

Two correct claims have been received this week in connection with the Photo Competition, and £5 notes have been sent to:

Miss LILY M. MERSON (No. 67),
18 Cave Street,
St. Paul's,
Bristol.

Mr. FREDERICK CARPENTER (No. 69),
61 New Road East,
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A Bile Bean Miracle.

SWOONED AFTER WALKING FIVE MINUTES; BUT CAN NOW WALK TEN MILES.

ANÆMIA AND HEART TROUBLE CURED.

CHARLES FORDE'S Bile Beans for Biliousness have just worked a cure which is locally regarded as miraculous, at Woburn Sands, amidst the most charming scenery in Bedfordshire. The subject is Miss Ellen Cooke, a domestic servant, of Inwood's Cottages; and to a *Bedfordshire Express* reporter she said: "It is now quite 11 years since I began to be ill. I suffered from anæmia with all its accompanying weaknesses. As time went on my condition grew worse. I had no colour and endured most severe pain. The climax appeared to be reached about four years ago when I was taken very ill indeed. I was told that I also suffered from ulcerated stomach and chronic indigestion. I had palpitation, which made me afraid of overtaxing myself in the least. As far as I dared I continued to attend to my duties; and the result was that I became utterly prostrated, and had to remain lying down and perfectly quiet until I could recover. On one occasion I set out to reach a place five minutes' walk away, but I was so very weak that I swooned before I got there. Even slow walking made me exhausted and faint. For

six weeks I was too weak to live on anything but milk food. Several times I went in for different medicines, but all efforts to bring about a cure were perfectly futile, until one day I happened to read in the weekly paper how a similarly extreme case had been cured by Charles Forde's Bile Beans for Biliousness. My father strongly advised me to give them a trial; and I consented. I had not been taking the Beans long before I felt that I was benefiting. My appetite improved day by day; and the food was digested without giving me any trouble such as I used to have. My spirits brightened, my strength increased, and life seemed to open out new promises of joy. Thanks entirely to Charles Forde's Bile Beans, I am now thoroughly recovered. I have neither the sickly look nor feeling I had before; and my appetite is quite satisfactory. The palpitation, ulcerated stomach, and chronic indigestion are complete strangers to me; and I never experience the 'fagged' feeling I used to do. Only the other day I walked ten miles; and neither then nor since have I experienced the least discomfort or sign of weariness."

Miss Cooke's parents fully bore out her statement, and said they had despaired of her ever being restored to health.

More conclusive testimony to the wonderful powers of Charles Forde's Bile Beans for Biliousness could not be desired. They are the "World's Greatest Specific" for anæmia in its worst forms, summer-end fag, chronic indigestion, palpitation, ulcerated stomach, and debility; while they are also unsurpassed for headache, dizziness, pains in the chest, side, and back, constipation, piles, pimples, face sores, blood impurities, liver and kidney disorders, female ailments, nausea, and fulness after meals. Obtainable from all chemists, or post free from the Bile Bean Manufacturing Co., 119 and 120 London Wall, London, E.C., for price 1s. 1½d. or 2s. 9d. (2s. 9d. box contains 3 times 1s. 1½d).

Short Stories That . . . . . Make You Laugh.

We devote every week space in *Short Stories* to pithy, humorous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. To those readers who submit storyettes which are used, a six shilling novel will be awarded. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case, the source MUST be stated. Attempts must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, January 20th. Post-cards only, please.

Easily Done.

JACK: "Maud wants to know why you shun her company now." Tom: "Well, the fact is, I'm hard up." Jack: "I'll tell her, and you needn't shun her any more." Tom (brightening up): "By Jove, do you think so?" Jack: "Yes. She'll shun you."

Bobby Knew His Name.

"MAMMA, I know the gentleman's name that called to see Aunt Ellie last night, and nobody told me either." "Well, then, what is it, Bobby?" "Why, George Dont. I heard her say 'George, don't!' in the parlour four or five times running. That's what his name is."

It was Necessary.

"MY friend," he said to the hotel manager, "I'm a very nervous man. Couldn't you give me a room with a fire-escape in it? You've got one, haven't you?" "Oh, yes," replied the manager. "And I might remark that, except in case of fire we keep the bulldog chained at the bottom of it." And the weary stranger sighed and sauntered forth.

He Hadn't a Chance.

JENKINS: "Well, sir, I gave it to that man straight, I can tell you, sir. He is twice as big as I am, too, but I told him exactly what I thought of his rascally conduct right to his face, and I called him all the names in the dictionary." Spudds: "And didn't he try to hit you, Jenkins?" Jenkins: "No, sir, he didn't. And when he tried to answer back I just hung up the telephone and walked away."

What Could Have Upset Her?

"I DON'T believe in feeding beggars at the door," said Mrs. Will. "You feed them once and they are sure to come back." "Well, I don't know," replied Mrs. Yeast. "I always give them bread when they come to my door, and I can't say that I ever knew a beggar to come the second time." "Oh, well, Mrs. Yeast, you make your own bread, do you not?" That was all she said, and yet Mrs. Yeast went down the street like a straw hat on a windy day.

He was All Right.

AN unfortunate fellow who had worked in a Lancashire cotton mill went out of his mind and was removed to an asylum. A fellow-worker, who chanced to be passing the asylum a few months after the man's removal, saw Jimmy sitting in the grounds smoking his clay pipe. "Hullo! Jimmy," he called out, "how are ta gettin' on?" "Oh, Ah'm gooin' on fust-rate," answered Jimmy. "Ah'm very glad to hear it, lad. Tha'll happen be gettin' back to work, sooin. What's ta think?" "What?" exclaimed Jimmy in huge surprise. "Live in a big house an' a grand garden like this, and go back to wark? Does ta think Ah'm wrang in mi yed?"

Drew the Line.

THE lion was at no pains to conceal his irritation. "I must insist," he finally declared, "upon knowing what that affair is which you are pointing at me." The hunter trembled violently. "It is a gun, sir," he faltered. The lion frowned. "Very well," said he, "but if I ever find it is a camera I shall hold you personally responsible."

The Way of Women.

THE MAID: "Mrs. Brown-Jones, ma'am." The Mistress: "Oh, such a bore! Tell her I am out. Janet." The Maid: "Yes'm." The Mistress: "But stay. What kind of a dress is she wearing?" The Maid: "A new one, ma'am; and it looks just like a late Parisian style." The Mistress: "Gracious! Tell her I'll be down without a moment's delay."

Couldn't Help her Hands.

HUSBAND: "The new cook makes everything too salt. It's terrible." Wife: "Well, she can't help that, poor thing. It isn't her fault that her hands are big." Husband: "What earthly difference can that make?" Wife: "That shows how much you know about housekeeping. The cookery books always measure salt by the pinch."

Not Good Enough.

SERGEANT (to private returned from South Africa): "Come now, fall in to be mustered. Don't you know this is the day for the commanding-officer's muster parade?" Private (in undertone): "Well, well, isn't it bad enough to have just returned from being 'peppered' by the Boers without having to be mustered by the commanding-officer?"

Lizzie's Great Trouble.

"MAGGIE, I am in great trouble. I am engaged to two young men at the same time, and the wedding day is set for both on the same date." "Well, Lizzie, which is the best?" "I don't know. Henry is a banker's son and Arthur is a reporter." "Well, goodness gracious, be sensible and take Arthur. He can describe the wedding in his paper."

How he Won the Bet.

A GENTLEMAN made a bet with a friend in a well-known West End club that he could not satisfy a cabman. "Done," said his friend, and the money was staked. They came out of the club, hailed a passing cab, rode a short distance, got out of the cab, and gave the driver a sovereign. The driver looked first at the sovereign, then at the gentleman, and said, "It's a long time since I had a 'quid,' sir; you might give me twopence for a drink to save changing it."

Insult to Injury.

A PARTY of amateurs some time ago arranged for a shoot, and ordered thirty pigeons from a dealer in a neighbouring town. The shooting was of a really wonderful character, but the actual performances need not be described in detail. The net results will be gathered readily from the following note which was subsequently received from the dealer. It ran: "Gentlemen, I beg sincerely to thank you for your order, and to intimate that I shall be only too happy to supply you with any number of birds on future occasions of the sort. The whole of the thirty birds, for which you paid me at the rate of eightpence per head, returned home in safety, and, moreover, brought with them a stray pigeon. My price to your party henceforth will be three-halfpence per bird."

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A packet of Borax Starch Glaze will cost you a penny, and will prove sufficient for half-a-dozen ordinary ironings.

Write to-day for a free trial sample, naming "S.S." Afterwards you will buy it regularly from your Grocer.

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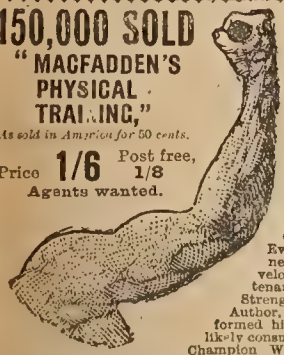

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THE following are replies to some of the many letters which I had received before the Editor of this paper agreed to devote a page to my correspondence each week. All communications must be sent to me personally at the offices of this paper.—MADGE MORRIS.

"Stephanie."—You have placed yourself in an awkward position. You are engaged to a man to whom you are deeply attached, and the spirit of mischief suggested that you should test the affections of your lover by walking out with someone else and allowing your lover to see you. He is too much of a gentleman to ask for an explanation in public, but he writes to you—a very nice letter, judging by the copy you have sent—and asks you to explain. Your answer is a reproach that he cannot trust you, and he accordingly ceases his visits. Now you see what you have done, and you ask me to advise you how to rectify matters. You must tell him plainly what you did, and ask forgiveness for an act for which you are now heartily sorry. If you write as you should, I have not the least doubt he will be ready to forgive. His letter shows him to be every inch a man.

"Maidie" puts the following question: "Should a young woman marry an old man?" She then proceeds to tell me that she is twenty and has had an offer of marriage from a man of forty-three, which she is disposed to accept. She believes she would be happy with him. As a rule, I think it unadvisable to marry when the ages are so different; in the earlier years of the married life the disparity is not perhaps so noticeable; but as the time rolls on, the one gets old while the other is still in the prime of life. And then, very often, unhappiness begins. Still, I have known two cases similar to yours, and in each instance the man and wife have been thoroughly happy. One of these husbands is now nearly seventy, and I know that the wife of forty-five has been, and is, as happy as anyone can wish to be. Other conditions being favourable, "Maidie," I see no objection.

No, "Queenie," it is not possible for you to love two young men with equal affection. Either you love one better than the other, or you really are not in love with either—you merely have a liking for them. Put yourself to the test. Try to imagine that one of them has proposed and you have accepted him; think over his character generally; then ask yourself whether you would like to spend your life with him. If you do this with all seriousness—as you would do before accepting an offer of marriage—you will not be long in discovering the true state of your feelings.

Your conduct, "Claude," is very foolish; I will not use any harder expression. You are dearly in love with a girl who, you believe, would make you an excellent wife. She is domesticated and loving, but she has not had the opportunity of educating herself to a great extent. She is doing her best to remedy this defect, and your friends tell you that your choice is a good one. But you are afraid of what your fellow-clerks might say, so you propose to break off the engagement. Perhaps you will see how unmanly and foolish your conduct is when you read it in black and white. Trust to your mother's instinct; she, who has your welfare at heart, advises you to marry the young woman, and a mother's love makes her far-sighted.

Yes, "In Doubt," I advise you to tell your lover that you were engaged two years ago to another. In the first place, if you really love him, it will come quite naturally to you to wish to tell him everything, and apart from this, he is sure to hear of it sooner or later, from someone else. To be perfectly open with those we love is the only way to insure a happy life with them.

"Troubled One."—Your dearest friend is indeed not worthy the name of a friend. I must say you were indiscreet to confide in her your love of a man you had never spoken to. Nineteen is very young; and you will most probably meet someone who suits you far better than this man. I should let it stand as it is. To write and explain to any man that you are "passionately in love" with him, would only be to place you in a very awkward position, and as things stand you surely can carry it off as a joke. No nice-minded girl would care to be thought pushing or forward.

"Irish Lass."—I am sorry to hear that you and your young man have quarrelled over the photo of another man, and I must say that quarrelling over so trivial a matter speaks badly for you both. Remember a breach is very easy to make, and very difficult to heal. I should either see him or write to him, and tell him you are lonely and miserable, and, if he really cares for you, he will be glad enough to be friends again.

PETTINGILL'S HUNT.

JIM PETTINGILL, who is a stout man, went home to his wife the other evening and asked her where she kept the key of his gladstone, as he wished to pack up a few things and take the night train for Glasgow to look after some important business matters.

Mrs. Pettingill told him to go upstairs to her room and he would find the key in the pocket of her black dress, which was hanging on a nail behind the door.

Poor, foolish mortal, he did not know that it was easier for the eye of a rich man to crawl through a camel than for his miserable self to find the pocket of his wife's dress.

Blinded by his own confidence, he took the dress off the nail, and that moment his sufferings commenced. He took a short survey of the garment as he held it up in his left hand in order to locate the position of the pocket.

His eyes rested on a small opening, and he thrust his hand into it, only to find his fingers gliding through a kind of bottomless concern, and then sticking his arm into it to the hilt he observed that his hand was protruding from an aperture on the other side. This caused him to change the position of the dress, and he saw another opening, and sounded its depths, and ascertained that it was the same mysterious hole he had been in a moment before.

This slightly annoyed him, and, after throwing off his coat, he went again in search of the pocket. He saw a little slit on the other side, and a softer light came into his eyes. "This is it," he murmured, and, putting his head into a shallow flounce, commenced to grope for the key, which, however, was sleeping snugly in the pocket at least two feet away. Pettingill got angry. He determined to find the pocket or die with his face to the foe, and the next minute he commenced stabbing the dress with both hands, hitting it straight blows from the shoulder, and dancing round it, just as if he were engaged in a rough-and-tumble fight.

He glanced at the clock, and saw that the train would start in forty minutes, and once more he jumped for the dress with a low yell that indicated plainly that he was angry enough to match himself against a hornet. He jammed his head into the folds of the dress, and commenced digging with both hands, and the air got full of satin bows, pieces of Watteau pleats and smothered growls.

While seated in a chair resting himself, he glared at the crumpled dress lying on the floor, and the idea occurred to him that the only way to keep the pocket from dodging him was to put the dress on. He did so, and then renewed his search, but his hands would slide into loops, furbelows, folds, flounces, and everything else except the much-desired pocket.

This was more than he could stand, and he determined to take off the dress and tear it to pieces, and thus discover the dwelling-place of the pocket. He pulled the dress up over his head as if he was divesting himself of a shirt, and it got caught in his braces and wrapped itself round his neck in a peculiar way, and he stooped forward and tugged at it with all his strength, but it would not give an inch, and appeared to tighten its grip round his head.

It was hot, and he was smothering in its folds, and, in order to release himself, he beat the air with both hands and danced up and down in one spot until the window-panes rattled.

The dress, however, knew that it was getting the better of him, and would not let him go, and then Pettingill, in his rage, made a blind dash and butted the basin and jug off the washstand and upset the rocking-chair, which prodded him severely in the ribs. The next dive he made the dressing-table suffer, and cologne bottles and powder boxes, mingling with a tin bath-tub and a bird-cage, rolled over the floor.

Mrs. Pettingill heard the crash, and hastening upstairs, discovered her husband lying on the floor on his back, with his arms and head bound up in her dress, and kicking both his legs in the air and using profanity to the tune of 140 degrees in the shade. She pulled him out of the dress, and he sat up on the floor and gazed at her in a dazed way, and rubbed his ribs with one hand, and wiped the blood off his nose with the other.

There was a look in his eyes which told Mrs. Pettingill that it was not the time to talk to her husband, so she merely picked up the dress, and without any trouble at all stuck her hand in a certain place and took out the key, which she handed him without saying a word. It was too late to catch the train, so Pettingill quietly bathed his bruised head and then went to a locksmith's, and when he came home he brought his key with him, but it was chained to a bar of pig-iron.

L. Y. PEARS.

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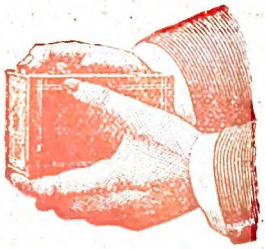

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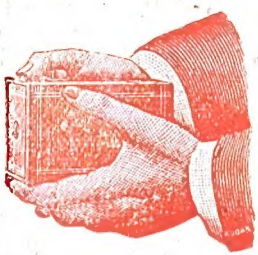

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